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"Issues and Challenges in English Language Teaching, Literature, and Translation"

Faculty of Languages & Arts
Semarang State University

Preface

A year ago, it named ELTL (English Language, Teaching, and Literature). At this moment, we think that a subject named Translation must be put in this seminar because translation is deeply interesting subject. Besides that, a few months ago, we had a Translation Conference named IATIS.

Last year, we discussed about relation of English language, Teaching, and Literature to Culture but at present, we discuss issues and challenges in English Language Teaching, Literature, and Translation. We expect that there are many lecturers, researchers, teachers, students and those interested who would like to contribute to the better relation among nations.

As the chair of 2nd English Language Teaching, Literature, and Translation International Conference 2013, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all presenters, especially Ms Helena Indiyah IRA., Ph.D, Ms. Kimberly Bunts-Anderson, Ph.D, Prof. Khairi Al Zubaidi, and Ms. Kari Dickson, M.A for accepting the invitation to speak as the keynote speakers.

We would like to do best for the smooth of the programs. The committee would also like to thank the rector of Semarang State University, Prof. Fathur Rokhman and the Dean of Languages and Arts Faculty, Prof. Agus Nuryatin for their full support. The last, we expect all presenters and participants to have wonderful conference at present and we hope all of you would like to join 3rd ELTLT next year.

Bambang Purwanto, S.S., M.Hum

Chair of ELTLT Committee

Faculty of languages and Arts

Semarang State University

Welcome from the Dean of Languages and Arts Faculty

As the Dean of Languages and Arts Faculty, we are proud to have an annual international conference such as ELTLT 2013.

To be chosen as presenters for the parallel presentation in this conference is a considerable honor and achievement. I would like to congratulate the presenters who have been selected, as well as the reviewers who have chosen the successful presenters. Obviously not everyone interested in the chosen topic could attend this conference, so the post-conference proceeding will present to a much wider audience issues related to the topic. The proceeding is also a proof that the contributions of presenters are valued.

I also would like to offer my congratulations and appreciation to the organising committee who have been working hard to prepare the conference, and to all keynote speakers, presenters, and participants for such an impressive conference.

We hope that through this annual ELTLT conference, there will be a stronger bond amongst academics, especially those with the expertise of English language teaching, literature, and translation. I wish you a wonderful conference.

Semarang, September 2013

Prof. Dr. Agus Nuryatin, M. Hum
The Dean of Languages and Arts Faculty
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THE APPLICABILITY OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
IN ENGLISH READING CLASS

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Abstract

Success of learning is not only a matter of using an appropriate teaching resources, instead, the interference of teaching method is found to be essential to determine the students' learning achievement. Teacher as a captain of class has the right to choose type of method used in the classroom for sake of students' improvement. This study was designed as an attempt to help Master Students from a well established private university improve their reading comprehension skill through small group discussion. This study was participated by 30 students, later divided into two classes and served differently as an experimental group for the class A and a control group for the class B. Referring to the final data analysis of the study, it is found that there is an improving learning achievement in the experimental group, indicated by higher performance of posttest (20.333) than the pretest. Apart from this, further analysis was also conducted to find out whether or not small group discussion was able to show better performance than another teaching method applied in another different class. Based on the result of statistical calculation, it shows that small group discussion got better result 12.334 than that of another group. As a result, some suggestions were made by referring to result of the study.

Keywords: small group discussion, teaching reading to Master Students, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

Rapid development of communication and information technologies has contributed to deprivation of borders with the dissemination of globalization and the world, in this case, is perceived to get smaller what makes it necessary to learn foreign language. In accordance with these, the interest of learning English as an international language has been found to be increasing.

Teaching English more effectively or making students learn this language better on their own has been still becoming an interesting issue for language educators. In order to achieve this, efforts are required to produce innovation that leads to better teaching.

Teaching language is a challenging task which demands dynamic techniques and methods compared with teaching other subjects. Integrating and developing four basic skills

such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are essentially needed to achieve success of learning language. As a result in various different learning characteristics and proficiencies students have, improving evenly all those four language skills at once in term of teaching language is difficult. Students possess different capability of receiving knowledge, different reaction towards teacher's talk and probably different interest and confidence in participating classroom activity what leads to a problem that teachers need to figure out. Making use of various and dynamic teaching methods and techniques are somehow believed to minimize these differences and increase chance for teachers to help their students participate in lessons equally and small group discussion in English reading comprehension class becomes focus of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a multidimensional process involving an act of understanding what is being read by taking various aspects such as an intentional, active and interactive process happens before, during and after the readers read a particular product of writing. As a result of this, the readers are expected to synthesize the essential fact, comprehend visualized details and sense availability of facts in the text being read (Sever, 1995; Jaromilek, 1985).

Reading comprehension is one of the goals of the act of reading where it is covering such a complex perception, affective kinesthetic, communicative and cognitive process. This process happens only when a person reads a text and being engaged in what he is reading. While this person is concurrently using his awareness to understand meaning from the text before eventually coming to the last component called reading comprehension.

There are three elements needed in order to support the process of reading comprehension among which are vocabulary, knowledge and text comprehension as well as the following seven major types of questions based on comprehension skills (Burns, Roe and Ross, 1984:109).

a. Main Idea

This is to help students be aware of details and relationship among others by indentifying the central theme of selection.

b. Detail

The goal is to critically ask for information conveyed by material.

c. Vocabulary

This is to help students identify meaning of words used in the selection. Besides, this will also help them check their understanding about word meaning.

d. Sequence

This is to help students identify events in order of occurrence.

e. Inference

The goal is to let students identify information that is implied, but not directly stated in the material.

f. Evaluation

The goal is to let students be able to make judgment about material they are reading.

g. Creative Response

This is to let students go beyond material and create new ideas based on what they read.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching method commonly used by teacher as a way of organizing classroom. This kind of technique is perceived to enable fast students to help slow students in terms of improving their skill. In other words, every student fights for developing both themselves and other group members because they are aware of the fact that the success of the group depends on the performance of each individual (Wilkinson, 1994). Within its application, this technique is primarily intended to let students cooperatively work together and critically think by discussing certain topic and solving problems or misunderstanding around the task given.

In order to successfully perform cooperative learning, learners are suggested to meet the following five basic elements (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1991):

1. *Group reward*

In order for members of a group to succeed, it is necessary for the group itself to become successful.

2. *Positive Interdependence*

Learners perceive that they need each other in order to complete a group task. Teacher may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals; joint reward shared resources, and assigned roles.

3. *Face to Face Promote Interaction*

   Learners promote each other's learning by helping, sharing and encouraging efforts to learn. Learners explain, discuss and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that the learners sit knee to knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment.

4. *Individual Accountability*

   Each learner performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. The teachers may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each learner or randomly selecting one group member to give the answer.

5. *Interpersonal and Small Group Skills*

   Group cannot function effectively if learners do not have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skill. Collaborative skill include leadership, decision making, trust – building, communication and conflict management skills.

6. *Group Processing*

   Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers act as a monitor to the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together to the other groups as well as the class as a whole.

Small Group Definition

Small group methods are technique of choice that provides educational system with needed flexibility. When properly used, these methods are believed to potentially increase learners' motivation through involvement and participation, later leads to:

- Better communication skills and intellectual and professional development (Brown and Atkins, 1998).
- Increased participation by learners, deeper and longer – lasting understanding and more motivation to learn independently (Gross Davis, 1999)

Apart from these advantages, small group method also has disadvantages. It is time consuming and may be difficult to grade or evaluate. Therefore, in its applicability, this

method needs to involve clear roles and responsibilities among learners and teacher in the classroom in order to minimize problems may occur.

Classification of Small Group Teaching

There are three small group teaching categories commonly applied in the classroom for various teaching purposes. They are Seminar, tutorial and problem solving. Seminar is a method commonly used for a larger and wider topic where every body in the group will share responsibility for material and present it to the group this group teaching is usually consist of 8 to 20 members in it (Brown and Atkins, 1998). Tutorial classes, in this case, suggest that these classes have a group of up to five and be designed for individual development. In practice, this teaching method mostly involves "trigger" in the process of learning aimed as an attempt to stimulate discussion (Brown and Atkins, 1998; types of small group event, 2007). Problem solving classes are designed to enable learners gain guidance and practice in using data and various sources of information to figure out a problem. These classes commonly involve a group of to thirty participants in it (Brown and Atkins, 1998).

Problem Based Learning in Language Learning

PBL is widely recognized as an active, integrated and constructive process affected by contextual and social factors (Barrows, 1996; Gijselaers, 1996) where it is characterized by a student-center approach and teacher, in this case, will act as a facilitator rather than disseminators (Wilkerson and Gijselaers, 1996). This method of learning is hoped to develop learner's intrinsic interest and promote a group work as well as to help them become self-directed learners.

In language learning PBL method gives a significant advantage compared to traditional methods in how the communicative skills of the learners are enhanced where the general ability of social interaction is also positively affected. By performing language practice around exercises that require learners to act, interact and communicate, it is expected that this can encourage learners to acquire a deeper sense of understanding and give learners more chance to practice the language on site. Superficial learning is often a problem in language education. Learners in general commonly learn all vocabularies they will probably need for future exam and then forget it after rather than grasping a sense of when and how to use which vocabulary. In general, learning language in such environment is considered to be more effective than teaching language exclusively as a foreign language (Larsson, 2001).

In a PBL classroom, such an issue may be minimized by introducing vocabularies in a real-world situation, rather than as words on a list, and by activating the learners that they will not be passive receivers of knowledge, instead, they are required to actively acquire the knowledge. The feeling of being an integral part of their group also motivates them to learn in a way that the prospect of a final examination rarely manages to do.

RESEARCH METHOD

This is an experimental study conducted at a well established private university in Semarang as an effort to find out the applicability of small group discussion to improve the students' reading comprehension skill. This study involved thirty Master Students out of two hundred and fifty taken randomly from the different faculties, and served as sample. These samples were clustered into two groups namely experimental and control groups where each group accommodated 15 participants. Test and questionnaire are the instruments required to this study aimed at gathering data needed. Test, in this case, was classified into two categories, pre-test and post-test.

Procedure of the Study

Pre-test was given to all groups at the beginning of the activities in order to gain the early data.

Treatment was another step to conduct after the pre-test. It took about six meetings excluding the pre and the post tests that each of which required about 100 minutes. To experimental group, in order to achieve the learning target, the following eight learning steps were involved during the training activities. The steps included:

1. Selecting a topic of reading passage provided by the teacher.
   Teachers let the students selected one of the five provided topics before getting down to the other learning steps.
2. Identifying and clarifying unfamiliar terms presented in the text.
   Students were required to indentify difficult words they found in the reading text, check up the meaning in dictionary and discuss with teammates in the group.
3. Defining problem(s) to be discussed.
   Students in this step had to understand the reading text and defined the issues being discussed.

4. Doing "brain storming" session to discuss the problem(s), suggesting possible explanation on basis of prior knowledge.

Students discussed the issues found in the step 3 and suggested possible explanation based on their early understanding.

5. Reviewing steps 2 and 3 and arranging explanations into tentative solutions.

Students reviewed steps 2 and 3 before making tentative solutions.

6. Formulating learning objectives

Students formulated learning objectives based on what they had discussed.

7. Collecting further information through private study

Students did self study by seeking for further information from any possible learning sources out of the class.

8. Synthesizing new information, evaluating and testing it against the original problem. Reflect on and consolidate learning

Students did the last steps on the next meeting after conducting self study out of the class.

During the treatment, teacher divided the role between teacher and students. The teacher in this study acted as a *facilitator,* he initiated the activity and kept the group on task as well as to reiterate roles for others, as needed. As a *Recorder,* he took notes as needed. As a *Reporter,* he presented the finding to the group after they completed the eight learning steps and the last role was as a *Time Keeper* to help keep team on task within time limits. While students, in this case, had to alternately select two of the participants to act as a leader and a recorder of the discussion and the rest would be participants. As there were only fifteen students in the experimental class, only twelve students got turn to be a leader and a recorder.

To completely answer the research questions posttest were conducted to all groups after the 6th meeting of the treatment, result of the tests would, then, be compared in order to gain data needed for further analysis. The post test was designed and applied similarly with the pre-test, in term of the test design and level of difficulty. All questions were presented in essay consisted of twenty questions that should be performed in sixty minutes. Content of the items presented in the post-test were different from ones already tested in the pre-test.

Procedure of Data Analysis

Things required to analyze the data:

1. Pre-test Result of Experimental and Control Group

2. Post-test Result of Experimental and Control Group

Steps of data analysis:
1. Comparing pre-test achievement of the groups
2. Comparing post-test achievement of the groups
3. Comparing between pre and post test achievement of experimental group
4. Comparing between pre and post test achievement of control group

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before initiating the first treatment, pre-test was conducted to measure the distribution normality and the initial achievement of control and experimental groups, and then the difference resulted in the data calculation between the two groups was compared. Results of the pre-test in this study were used to know the proficiency level of participants as well as to analyze the impact of each method towards students' achievement in learning English as a foreign language.

Table 1. A Pre – Test Achievement Comparison Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experiment	15	61.3333	9.15475	.588	.752	-1.00000
Control	15	62.3333	7.98809			

Sig. (2-tailed) > 5% (insignificant)

From the output of the pre-test, it was found that the value of sig. is 0,588 = 58.8% > 5%, means that the variable homogeneity is normal and test results of both groups are close to each other where mean of the experimental group was 61.3333 and the mean of the control group was 62.3333. The fact that there is no significant difference at the means between the two groups, it indicates that they were nearly at the same level of proficiency at the beginning.

In order to find out which method could yield better achievement at the post-test, comparative result analysis between the two groups was conducted. This comparative analysis was done based on the result of mean and the sig. (2-tailed) in the t-test bellow.

Table 2. A Post – Test Achievement Comparison Between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experiment	15	81.6667	9.38591	.224	.000	12.33333
Control	15	69.3333	7.28665			

Sig.(2-tailed) .000 < 5% (Significant)

The comparative result in the t-test above shows that means of experimental and control groups were significantly different. The difference indicates that the experimental group was higher about 12.33333 than the control group. This result of analysis is strengthen by the result finding at sig.(2-tailed) which is .000, lower than 5%, means that result gained by experimental group is different from the control group. By referring to these analysis results of analysis, small group discussion technique applied in experimental group had a better impact on reading comprehension skills than the control group.

Tab.3. A Pre and Post-test Results Comparison of Experimental Group

Test	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Pretest	15	61.3333	9.15475	.963	.000	-20.33333
Posttest	15	81.6667	9.38591			

Sig.(2-tailed) .000 < 5% (Significant)

From the data presented at the table 3, the mean score result of the post-test of this experimental group is higher 20.33333 than that of the pre-test. The significance of difference between the first and the second tests was gained by statistically testing the data from the pre and the post-test of the experimental group. The result of this shows that sig.(2-tailed) was .000 lower than 5%, means that difference between the tests conducted prior and after the treatment is realized to be significant.

Table 4. A Pre and Post-test Results Comparison of Control Group

Test	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Pretest	15	62.3333	7.98809	.370	.018	-7.00000
Posttest	15	69.3333	7.28665			

Sig.(2-tailed) .000 < 5% (Significant)

By understanding the statistical data presented on the table 4, it can be inferred that the mean score in the post-test is slightly higher 7.0 than that of the pre-test, means that there is an improvement on the students' achievement before and after the treatment. In order to understand the significance of difference between the result in the pre and the post-test, t-test was applied. Taking the result of t-test calculation, sig.(2-tailed) is lower than 5% means that there is also significant difference in result between the pre and the post-test in the control group.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the result of this study, it is obvious that small group discussion has contributed positive impact toward students' learning result. From the result comparison between the pre and the posttest of experimental group, it is indicated that the posttest of this group is found to be higher 20.333 than the pretest, meaning that there is improvement in achievement before and after treatment. In addition to this, another statistical calculation result of the posttest comparison between experimental and control group shows that experimental group has performed better than the control group. This is indicated by the means difference of the experimental group, which is higher 12.334 than that of the control group. As a result, following suggestions can be made:

1. Small group discussion can be considered as one of teaching methods that is applicable not only for developing reading comprehension, but also speaking and writing.
2. As this study was conducted in a short and restrictive period, further studies covering a longer period of time may possibly be applied in order to gain more understanding about the applicability of small group discussion as a teaching method.
3. Further study on the use of small group method could be carried out to a subject other than reading comprehension such as grammar, speaking and writing and to analyze the applicability of this method towards these subjects.
4. Using small group discussion that refers to the use of PBL should consider language proficiency level of participants.

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