ABSTRACT


Key words: improving, reading comprehension, small group discussion technique

Reading is an important activity in every language. Reading enables people to find out information from a variety of texts, written or printed information from newspapers, magazines, advertisements, brochures, and so on. According to Djiwandono (2008:62) reading is an important activity and becomes more important in this modern world, where the development in every life aspect occurs very quickly. As a part of language skills, reading plays an important role for the success of language learning. In reading activity, we are not only reading the text, but also trying to understand what we are reading.

The study was designed to improve the students’ reading comprehension ability by using the small group discussion. The study was collaborative Classroom Action Research. The subjects were the students of XI IPA3 at MAN 2 Madiun in the 2008/2009 academic year consisting of forty students. The study was conducted through cyclic activities to collect the data consisting of preliminary study, planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. There were two criteria to determine that the study was considered successful, namely, the students’ mean score increased from 5.6 into 6.5, the students were actively involved in the teaching learning activities, and 80% of the students were able to answer the questions based on the text in reading comprehension.

The findings indicated that small group discussion was successful in improving students’ reading comprehension ability. The improvement could be seen from the increase of the students’ mean scores and the students’ involvement in reading comprehension activities. The mean scores obtained by the students in the two cycles were shown by the results of their test. While the students’ involvement in reading comprehension activities in the two cycles were shown by the observations checklists, field notes, and also the results of the test. The mean score 64.70 in Cycle 1 had not achieved the first criterion of success. In Cycle 2, the students’ mean score reached 70.83. This means that the first criterion of success had not been achieved. Besides, the finding also showed that small group discussion was effective in enhancing the students’ involvement in reading comprehension activity. In Cycle 1, 65% of the students were involved in reading activity and the percentage was bigger in Cycle 2 that is 80%. This means that the second criterion of success was achieved.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that the appropriate model of small group discussion could be well implemented by using three procedures: (a) pre- reading activity that focused on activating the students’ prior knowledge; (b) whilst reading activity that focused on reading the text silently, discussing the content of the text with their group, answering comprehension questions, monitoring and providing assistance, and checking the students’ answers; (c) post reading activity that focused on rechecking the students’ understanding of the text.

From the findings, it could be inferred that small group discussion was not only effective in improving the students’ reading comprehension ability but also in enhancing their participation in the learning process. Therefore, it was suggested that English teachers applied small group discussion in teaching and learning reading comprehension.

Yet, teachers should design a suitable model of small group discussion, designed the lesson plans, chose model texts, composed tasks, and allocated the time since more time was required when it came to low achievers. Furthermore, teachers should consider the principles of small group discussion so as to reach the expected outcomes. Besides, it was advisable that teachers gave more and various tasks to the students. The tasks could be done at home as a homework or project if the time at school was limited. More and various tasks could enrich students’ knowledge and made them more trained.

To the future teacher-researchers, particularly those who were interested in applying small group discussion in their classroom research, it was suggested that they conducted classroom action research on the use of small group discussion in teaching reading related to text types other than the one in this research, such as procedure, report, recount, narrative and hortatory exposition.
Improving the reading comprehension ability of the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Madiun through the small group discussion technique / Ida Sriwidati

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