
Affinity Group In EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to know the effect of affinity group in EFL reading classroom of English Department students in University of PGRI Yogyakarta. In measuring the reading comprehension of students the pre-test and post-test are done. The experiment of reading comprehension is done by recruiting of 19 students of EFL reading classroom and do the training and exercising of reading text in reading class. These students are all second-year at PBI-UPY and aged between 17 and 20. Standard measurement is comparison of students answer in pre-test and post-test of reading exercises. The result of this research is students who passed the standard score improved from 25% in the preliminary data to 71% at the end of the research. It means that affinity group strategy improves students' reading comprehension that is influenced by student's factors and lecturer factors.

Keywords: Affinity group, EFL, reading comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowdays students in Indonesia are living in the digital era that influenced their thinking and also act. The role of environment and social life will force them to be good or on the contrary. Marx (1971: 183) states that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. The statement that came from Marx lead us to a conclusion that the real life of students really related to their school environment, family and so on. That condition will be hard if there is no support each other in that condition of life.

Previous works related to English reading comprehension are more specific in reading strategies in many countries where English is still considered a second language or a foreign language. Many scholars have described strategies to improve reading comprehension for EFL students. However, studies on reading strategies in improving

reading comprehension are rarely conducted by Javanese or Indonesian language teachers. In Indonesia, studies of reading strategies focus on the same strategies with different subjects. There are only a few studies related to this study.

Alfiyani (2012) writes about the use of metacognitive strategies in teaching reading to eleventh grade students of SMAN 2 Kudus. He found that the reading ability of eleventh grade students of SMA N 2 Kudus in the academic year 2011/2012 after being taught using the Metacognitive Strategy was better than the reading ability of eleventh grade students of SMA N 2 Kudus in the academic year. 2011/2012 before being taught using the Metacognitive Strategy. Another Indonesian researcher, Galih (2010) wrote about the SQ3R reading strategy helping tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Srengat, Blitar, and East Java to solve their problems in reading descriptive texts. He found that the SQ3R reading strategy could help improve students' ability to read descriptive texts by providing a structured approach to reading activities.

According to an earlier explanation, in Indonesia, research related to reading strategies in improving understanding of reading English as a second language is rarely conducted. Indonesian students' English reading strategies are interesting topics to be studied by researchers. Thus, it can be concluded that this research is relatively new and needs to be done. This research will make a new contribution to ELT and other second language learning in Indonesia.

Basic Concepts of Reading

Teaching reading EFL is a little different from the way native speakers are taught to read. While vocabulary is an important part of reading, teaching survey reading skills, skimming, scanning, drawing conclusions, predicting and guessing is equally important. Research tends to show that students' reading comprehension can be improved by focusing on teaching students' skills in the following areas:

a. Vocabulary

Many languages don't have the concept of building words like English. In teaching vocabulary, the idea of the word "root" and the prefix and suffix help students build larger vocabularies quickly. Affixes (prefixes and suffixes) help us make various words from one basic word. Many EFL students will not admit that containing is the basic word of receptivity and containment or that desire is the

basic word of unwanted and desirable. When teaching new vocabulary, it is important to show this connection and we can quickly help students expand their vocabulary with basic words they already know. Teaching affix is just one of several strategies for teaching vocabulary. See the link below for more information.

b. Surveying, Scanning, Skimming

In the academic environment, we rarely read the entire text word for word. What is more typical is that we look at the contents of books, chapters, titles, subtitles, sidebars, pictures, illustrations, italics and bold and dive to find the information we need. This is a concept of surveying, scanning and scanning, moving from text big ideas to specific details. This is a skill that is usually not possessed and must be taught by EFL students. Related readings for teaching EFL reading below will give you more specifics about these skills.

c. Guessing and Predicting from Context

Students also need to be taught to guess the meanings of words based on the context of the reading and to draw from the reading an ability to predict what might happen in the next paragraph. Links below will lead to more information on these skills.

Teaching Reading

Some argue that reading is a conceptual process and thinking through print, and the process is interpretive. Widdowson (1979) argues that reading is "the process of obtaining linguistic information through print media." Ransom (1978: 14-15) defines reading as a 'conversation' between researcher and reader. He stated that like someone who was speaking, "the researcher is trying to convey some messages to others." Shaw (1959: viii) also states that reading is a communication of thoughts, moods, and emotions through which one receives 'from others their ideas and feelings'. Nuttall (1996: 4) considers reading as the process of "getting out of the text almost like a message the researcher put into it." Williams (1996: 2) states reading as a 'process' through which people see and understand written texts. Goodman (1967) defines reading as a 'psychological guessing game', and Patricia Carrel et al (1988) defines reading as an 'interactive process' in which readers use their background knowledge and past experience to understand texts. Reading, according to Moynihan (1969: 267), "often uses chronology, contrast-comparison, causality, and analogies."

This process is precisely active (Doff, 1997: 67; and Rauch et al. 1971) and cognitive (Urquhart and Weir, 1998: 17), and the reader in contact with the text carries it out (op. Cit.). Grellet (1996: 8) defines reading as 'active skills'. Rauch and Weinstein (1971) refer to reading as an active and alert thinking process "where the reader matches the researcher's thought to think." According to Shaw (1959: viii) reading is "thinking with the researcher, absorbing his ideas." Urquhart and Weir (1998: 22) has tried to provide definitions of reading that are precise, short-cut, and acceptable after observing and analyzing the definitions of others. According to them, reading "is the process of receiving and interpreting information coded in the form of language through print media."

Affinity groups

Affinity groups involve graduates and undergraduate students, as well as students who represent various educational backgrounds and families with varying degrees of expertise, abilities, interests and skills. The most important feature of affinity groups is that they are built around a cooperative paradigm (Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., E. J. Holubec, 1992.). More and more information from a group, as in traditional research groups, does not ensure that it will function as a cooperative group. The key is group structuring by explicitly teaching and practicing social and group skills.

The five basic elements present in group activities include the following:

- a. Positive interdependence imparts a feeling that each member is vital to the success of the other. This can be arranged, for example, through shared roles and goals.
- b. Face-to-face promotion interactions ensure that students support and encourage learning and engagement with each other.
- c. Individual accountability requires that each group member is a fair and responsible part of the final output. It's important to develop strong individuals. In affinity groups, each student is responsible for their submissions. As a group, members help each other achieve mastery or task competence
- d. Group skills are taught. Faculty mentors do not assume that students come with the skills needed to work in groups. Group skills are taught and practiced explicitly in activities designed around technical topics (eg, discussion of journal papers, criticizing technical presentations).
- e. Group processing requires that the group needs time to reflect on how well the group functions. Members determine what behaviors are beneficial and should be continued,

and what behaviors must be modified. This gives them an opportunity to improve their actions and, as a result, improve group dynamics and group effectiveness.

The skills of composing and doing form through structured activities. Many of the skills found at this level are skills that consist of leadership skills. Because students are involved with research groups for a long period of time, they have the opportunity to properly train skills and transfer them to facilitate others without facilitating faculty leadership.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Subject

This experimental study involved 19 subjects from various regions in Indonesia (EFL) Engagement 17-20. They mainly use their native language in daily communication and live in Yogyakarta. In addition, they have never visited British countries. Subjects were all English Department students at the PGRI Yogyakarta University (PBI-UPY) and all subjects had studied English for two years. To facilitate the training process, subjects will discuss pre-test and post-test will be used for educational and experimental purposes.

B. Material

The strategy training procedures used in this study are based in affinity group. All reading lessons are given in this study were conducted in English. Before trained researcher and students conduct general discussions about strategic learning and reading. The author explains and class discusses the learning and practicing effectively is important. The discussions which discusses are as follows; reading comprehension, reading efficiency and expect readers. The researcher uses this type of discussion not only in the initial class period but also repeatedly to ensure that students realize the importance and value of what they do.

C. Reading Test Procedure

It is very important for students to set different milestones on semester projects and discuss them with fellow group members to understand their goals. At the weekly meeting, each student answers the following questions: 1) what should you know or achieve this week? 2) What needs to be done? 3) What challenges did

you meet? This gives students the opportunity to reflect on, improve, and improve their abilities in groups and projects. Students develop research throughout the semester by working with faculty mentors and through pairs of researcher beginners and experienced students in groups. In this Environment, students learn to communicate knowledge to people with various levels of expertise. Some projects are approved within the scope of the group and are usually funded through research grants.

Most learning is self-directed (students develop background in their area of interest through extensive reading), while project group meetings are held to discuss literature. Brainstorming sessions are used to generate new ideas and find solutions to problems. One important aspect of the affinity group model is that students must integrate knowledge from various sources into one or more applications. Students respond to present technical conversations to understand them about technical material. This activity helps students understand in the field of research, and helps determine whether he can provide their knowledge about the material and answer questions from the audience. The audience member determines the criteria provided on the form. The idea of constructive criticism, that is, criticizing an idea and not the person, is approved and practiced.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

1. Result

The researcher conducted the experimental research by using Affinity group strategy in solving the students reading comprehension that always occur in reading classroom. The next step is the researcher computed the students pre-test and post-test and calculated the mean score of each test. The researcher presents the result and its discussion as follows:

a. Pre-test

The researcher started the lesson by giving brainstorming to the students by asking their experience in reading text and their comprehension. The pre-test done after the brainstorming did. The researcher manage the time and also the make sure the

students do the pre-test individually. The pre-test was not work properly, the students find many difficulties and lack of confident in answering the test. The mean score of students competence in comprehend the reading text is 25% of them that passed the test. It is categorized as poor to average. It can concluded that the students reading comprehension are low

b. Post-Test

Based on the pre-test score the researcher start to implement the affinity group by previewing of the basic of affinity group strategy itself. The next step that researcher do is controlling the process of affinity group strategy by asking in each meeting reading class. The fourteen weeks implementing the affinity group strategy the researcher do the posttest. While the process of post-test there are many changes of students confident and comprehension. The individually work that have done by students are measured and has a different result like pre-test. The students mean score in post-test is 71% who passed the test which is mean average to good.

2. Discussion

The experiment data are done in two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The first meeting of the experiment the subjects are given reading comprehension pre-test. The experiment did in 14 weeks, when the subjects finished 38 hours of training the subjects are given the same reading comprehension test as a post-test. The rationale for using exactly the same test for both pre- and post-testing was to assure an exactly comparable test, thus avoiding the problem of equating different forms of pre-test and post-test.

This research are conducted in pre-test and post-test. The acting stage is conducted in 14 meeting with 155 minutes per-meeting. In doing teaching learning process some problems are occurs as follows: The students find difficulty in finding the topic, the students feel difficulty in finding the main idea and they get difficulties in finding detail information.

In pre-test, the students find difficulty in finding the topic, the students feel difficulty in finding the main idea and they get difficulties in finding detail information. In conducting the post-test the same test are given to students. The researcher also actively monitored the student's activity in implementing the affinity group strategy. The researcher ensured that all the students do the exercise in group discussion. Students are more active and enjoy during the affinity group strategy process. The groups that has made are shared their difficulties and experience in doing the affinity group strategy. After observed the

process of affinity group and processed the data the researcher decided to stop the action because the data showed that indicators of success are fulfilled

The researcher computed the students result of test and find the mean score. The research finding showed that the students mean score in pre-test is 25% who passed the test. It is qualified as poor to average. The post-test mean score is 71% who passed the test and it is qualified as good average. By applying affinity group strategy, the students do a lot of discussion that drive them in fun and active learning. The researcher prove that it is a good strategy to build their comprehension. It is focus on their awareness of being active and encourage in doing reading exercise. In every meetings they have improve their understanding the topic, main idea and detail information in the text given.

Affinity group strategy could improve the student's motivation and ability by discussion outside the class that made a great discussion and understanding for each group. Students are encourage to be active in doing their discussion of their group. It also lead the students more active learning process and deeper in understanding the text. All in all the research finding of the research are satisfying. The students comprehension are improve by implementing the affinity group strategy. In teaching learning process the students are able to do many components of reading comprehension such as topic, main idea and detail information. The affinity group provides a freedom of discussion and chance to elaborate more the text.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result and discussion above, the researcher give the conclusion as follows: 1. Students reading comprehension is improved by applying affinity group strategy by mean score increased from 25% to 71%. 2. In pre-test the indicators of success are still not fulfilled. And in the post-test the indicators of success are fulfilled and the action is stopped. 3. Affinity group in reading strategy is able to make the students feel fun in learning process. They are able to find or understand the basic of reading comprehension such as main idea, topic, vocabulary questions and detail information. The affinity group provides fun and teamwork so students could comprehend the text clearly.

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