THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION IN FACING THE ASEAN ECONOMY COMMUNITY ERA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to find out whether the STAD technique, one of the cooperative teaching methods, could be used to improve the students' ability in reading comprehension. The sample of this research was the second semester students of English Department. The number of students used as sample were 10, consisting of 3 males and 7 females. The method used for this research is a classroom action research, with qualitative approach, and it was conducted in two cycles. The procedure of the research consisted of four main steps: planning, implementing, observing and reflecting. The instruments used in collecting data were test, students' observation sheet and teachers' observation sheet and questionnaire for the students. The result of the research proved that implementing Student Team Achievement Division technique was effective to improve the students' ability in reading comprehension. It can be seen from the result of teacher' observation sheet and students' observation sheet. The percentage of teacher's observation obtained was 100 % and for students' observation obtained was 95 %, it meant that the observation of teacher and students reached the target indicator. Based on the data gained from the test in the first cycle, the percentage grade that students obtained was 52 %, It meant that the students did not reach the target indicators. Then, in the second cycle, the percentage grade that students obtained was 94 % and it meant that students reached score higher than minimum target indicators. It can be concluded that using STAD technique at second semester students of English Department can improve the students' reading comprehension, as well as the activity of students and teacher during the teaching and learning process.

Key words: Cooperative Learning, STAD technique and reading comprehension.

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of ASEAN Economy Community provides a special challenge in the development of education world. The educators must bridge their students in facing their future. Therefore, the educators have to broaden their knowledge to improve their students' abilities. One of the abilities, in language, is reading especially reading comprehension. Through reading, the students can obtain more knowledge and information about the world. They can accesses many resources to gain information about ASEAN Economy Community to enhance their capacity. However, the available information is in English, so many students have problems in understanding the information.

In this case, the researcher found some problems of students' reading comprehension, those are: most of students are lack of motivation in learning English especially in reading, it is hard for them to put the words together to make sense of the meaning after translating it

word by word, they are not interested and bored in translating text and answering the questions in every meeting.

The problems do not just appear in students' side, but the problems also appear in researcher's side. The writer realizes that she has difficulties to develop her skill in teaching reading comprehension. Also, the writer realizes that there are many factors those influence in English learning activities, especially in reading. Several ways had been found to improve teaching and learning process, one of them is to change the method and strategy in English teaching by the researcher. Therefore, the writer wants to try to apply STAD (Student Team Achievement Divisions) to solve her problems.

In addition, the writer conducted a Classroom Action Research on the implementation of STAD in teaching reading comprehension. Based on the background of study, the writer formulated the problems of study as the following.

a. How is the implementation of STAD in improving students' ability in reading comprehension?
b. What are the students' response about the implementation of STAD technique?

According to the problem above, the objectives of this study are to know how the STAD technique implement in reading comprehension and to find out the students' response about the implementation of STAD technique.

In this research, the researcher determined the success indicators. These indicators were used to justify the research findings. Those are :

1. Greater than or equal to 70% of the question in the test can be answered correctly after implementing of techniques.
2. Greater than or equal to 75% of the total sample participate in the classroom activity while applying the technique.
3. Greater than or equal to 80% of the total samples are interested in STAD technique.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Reading

Reading is really an essential activity which has many benefits. Reading is defined as a complicated procedure. Readers read to get information from the printed pages. They should be able to pronounce and comprehend the printed words, signs, letters, and symbols by assigning meaning to them. It means that they need to pay attention to the words and translate it into word by word then put the words together to make sense of the text. In fact, to learn reading comprehension for some teenagers are difficult because they are poor of vocabulary and confuse about words that have many meanings in English.

A few years back, people who want to give information or share to other people in a far place, they need to write a letter and certainly the readers must have a good comprehension in reading, so that they can understand what the writer means in his/her letter. Reading as a two way interaction in which information; is exchange between the reader and the author. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that all of people in this world do not look down reading skill, because reading and writing are key of sciences.

2.2   Reading Comprehension

According to Finocchiaro and Bonomo (1980) "The language learning on the other hand, has out acquired the basic pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension before they can begin to read." From that statement, it can be concluded that if the students want to master reading skill then they have to learn some skills, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and comprehension.

1. Pronunciation: teaching the pronunciation rules of English is important, because if the students have bad pronunciation when they read a book, people will be confused about what the students read. Gilbert (2004) stated that if someone cannot hear English well, she or he is cut off from the language. It can be concluded that pronunciation gives a significant effect to the meaning of what someone reads.

2. Vocabulary: the vocabulary is very important to know the meaning of text or written word, as the reader must know what writer means. If the students learn English, they must be able to memorize many words. The goal is to understand easily in getting the information by the writer. As stated by Edward (1997), "Vocabulary is one of the important factors in all language teaching; students must continually learn words as they learn structure and as they practice sound system." It means that the students should memorize many words to broaden their ability.

3. Comprehension: in this case, the students have to study hard, if they want to improve their ability in reading comprehension. Comprehension is the intersection among word identification, prior knowledge, comprehension strategies, and engagement. It means that all of the students have to know how to identify words in the text so that they can understand what they read.

2.3   The Purpose of Reading

Reading skill is very important to develop not just in teaching learning process but also in our daily activity. People can read a text but hardly can understand what the writing was all about. This is because the reading was not providing any information to the reader. Why is this happen? This happened when the reader merely read the text without understanding the content. According to Mariam (1991) "A major avenue of learning is through reading. Yet, if we do not understand what we are reading, we cannot learn or remember it. Comprehending is a major concerned, then, of all teachers who use printed material in the classroom." So, the writer can take conclusion that one of the purpose of reading is the reader must know what the author means so that he/she can get any information or to be entertained.

2.4   Student Team Achievement Divisions (STAD)

STAD is a cooperative teaching method which was developed by Slavin (1978) as part of a student learning approach program along with other cooperative methods such as Teams-Games-Tournaments, Jigsaw II (Slavin, 1980), and Team Assisted Individualization (Slavin, 1981). In STAD, students are assigned to four or five members of learning teams.

The teams are composed of high, average, and low performing students, boys and girls of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. Thus, each team is a microcosm of the entire class.

It enables the students according to the requirements of the modern society by teaching them to work with their colleagues competently and successfully as explained by Balfakih. The findings of Balfakih (2003) as quoted by Suryanullah (2012) have indicated that in teaching 10th grade chemistry,Students Team Achievements Division (STAD) is a more effective teaching methodthan the traditional-teaching method. That was the reason for the selection of STAD is goodinteractionamongstudents, improve positive attitude towards subject, better self-esteem, increased interpersonal skills.

2.5   The Principle of STAD

The principle of STAD is the students are asked to be more active than their teacher. So that, their ability in developing English skills is better. According to Muslims (2000) as quoted by Suryanullah (2012), there are six basic principles of Students Team Achievement Division, those are:

1. Each members of the group are responsible for everything that is done in a group.
2. Each members of the group should know that all of the group members have similar goals.
3. Each members of the group has to split the duties and responsibilities equally among group members.
4. Each members of the group will be evaluated.
5. Each members of the group share leadership skills and need to learn together during the learning process.
6. Each members of the group will be required to be individually accountable for the material handled in a cooperative group.

In STAD, detailed steps Slavin (1995) as quoted by Suryanullah (2012) are as follows:

1. Class Presentations. The teacher presents the material in front of the class in the classical style that focuses on the concepts of matter to be discussed only. Furthermore, students are asked to learn in small groups to work on tasks assigned by the teacher.
2. The formation of study groups (Teams). Students are organized into groups whose members are heterogeneous (both academic ability and gender). The trick with rank students based on grades or the last value obtained before the student STAD cooperative learning models. The function of this grouping is to encourage cooperation in the group study the material and complete the tasks assigned by the teacher.
3. Provision of test or quiz (Quizzes). After studying the group completed the test, quiz was held with the objective of identifying, or the ability to measure student learning of the material has been studied. In this case, the student was not allowed to work with his friend. The purpose of this test is to motivate students to try and individually responsible. Students are required to do their best as a result of group learning. In addition to individual responsibility, the students also have to realize that businesses and their success will be very valuable to contribute to the success of

the group. This test is performed after one to two servings of classes and learning in groups.

4. Improved scoring individual (Individual Improvement Scores). This is done to give the students a goal that can be achieved if they worked hard and showed good results compared with previous results.

   Scoring guidelines:

   a. Quiz score more than 10 points below base score : 0
   b. Quiz score 10 to 1 point below base score : 10
   c. Quiz score 0 to 10 points above base score : 20
   d. Quiz score more than 10 points above base score : 30
   e. Perfect score (without compare to the base score) : 30

5. Awards group (Team Recognition) award is given to the group to give a gift in appreciation of the efforts that have been made during the study.

There are three central concepts that characterize learning as expressed by Slavin (1995) as quoted Isjoni (2009), namely:

1. Group awards, group awards are obtained if the group achieved scores above the specified criteria.
2. Individual responsibility, accountability focuses on the activities of each group member Format in learning.
3. Equal opportunity to succeed, each students either low or high achievers alike the opportunity to succeed and do the best for the group

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at University of Abulyatama. The sample of this study was the total number of second semester students of English Department Students. The method used in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). In this opportunity, the writer used qualitative data. This research was done in several phases. Those are: Planning the action, Implementing the action, Observing the action, and Reflecting the result (based on Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1998).

There are some instruments were used in this research, those are:

1. Lesson plan. To make the teaching planning process run well, the writer designed lesson plan. In designing the lesson plan, the writer considered the components of standard competency, based competency, indicator, the objectives of learning, learning materials, learning activities, sources, media, and procedure of assessment.
2. Questionnaire. The questionnaire is in close ended form that consisted of 10 items and it was distributed to all of the students at the end of the cycle.
3. Observation sheets. These instruments consisted of teacher's observation sheet and students' observation sheet.

3.1. Data Analysis

The writer compared the result of each cycle during teaching learning process. To answer the problem of study, the writer used descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data of observation and questionnaire.

IV. DISCUSSION

The writer did a research in two cycles to see the students' response about implementation of STAD technique and to know how the implementation of STAD technique in reading comprehension, is there any improvement of students' ability in reading comprehension or not. As seen in the result of this research that in the first cycle, the students' score average obtained 52, 89 for the first meeting. Then, the students' score average obtained 76, 84 for the second meeting. It was 23, 95 point improved from the first meeting to the second meeting, even though it improved but it did not reach the target indicators so that the researcher continued to the second cycle.

As seen in the result of the second cycle, the students' score average obtained 81, 56 for the first meeting. Then, the students' score average obtained 85, 26 for the second meeting. It was 3.7 point improved from the first meeting to the second meeting, it improved and it reached the target indicator too. In the other hand, the writer saw the students' response about implementation of STAD technique by giving the questionnaire. The result of questionnaire was 41% of students vote agree and 42% vote strongly agree, if the voter of agree and strongly agree were totaled, it must be 83% students interested about the implementation of STAD technique. It can be concluded that this research was successful.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis, the writer would like to draw some conclusions about Classroom Action Research (CAR) to the second semester students of English Department. First, the students' ability in reading comprehension in both of the cycle had improved from the average score 76, 84 to 85, 26. It can be concluded the score met criteria of success. Second, the students' difficulties during learning English in reading comprehension were pronunciation, comprehension, and lack of vocabulary were solved by working cooperatively in a group.

Teaching reading comprehension by using STAD Technique is effective way for improving students' interest in learning English, because they can share their opinion to other students and the students who still have problem about material will be helped by their smart friends. It happened because the writer divided students in group based on characteristic of STAD that the teams are composed of high, average, and low performing students, boys and girls of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. The students had positive responses toward the implementation of STAD technique.

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