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Describing Secondary Students' Emotional Engagement in Reading Comprehension Through Small Group Discussion : A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Small group discussion is a learning process by conducting small group discussions so that students have the skills to solve problems related to learning materials. As a commonly used method, small group discussion is also often used by teachers in learning English, especially in reading comprehension. The number of procedures that teachers must do when starting small group discussion learning sometimes makes teachers forget one of the steps which has an impact on students' emotional engagement during learning. While many studies focus on improving students' reading comprehension by using small group discussion, this study examines How does students' emotional engagement in learning reading comprehension through small group discussion. This study aims to describe how students' engagement in learning reading comprehension through small group discussion method. This research uses a case study design. The data was then analyzed using observation and interview. It was found that small group discussion can positively encourage students' emotional engagement in the context of reading comprehension, and can involve a positive teacher role in learning although there are drawbacks to small group discussion such as learning is too monotonous. Therefore, small group discussion seems to be recommended to be applied in reading comprehension learning.

1. Introduction

Reading is an activity to find various information in text. Reading is an interactive process in which language learners comprehend and draw the big picture of the text by employing various reading strategies and skills (Isaqjon, 2022). Reading is one of the four skills in learning English. Reading skills need to be mastered by everyone, especially students in school because by reading we can find out the

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meaning of each text we read and we can also develop our knowledge. Reading is regarded as an extremely important skill for the learner because it provides access to a large number of additional experimental languages as well as a window into the formal means of continuing his personal education (Mogea, 2023). Students in junior high school should be able to read a wide range of English subject matter. Junior high school students usually complete assignments by skimming until they come across terms they don't understand. In practice, students need information to understand the texts they read. Students who do not read much will find it difficult to master new material and thus will get lower grades.

Comprehension is usually closely related to reading. The purpose of reading comprehension is to understand or obtain meaning from written text. Similarly to Tatipang, et.al (2021) stated that reading comprehension is a mental process in which readers become aware of an idea, comprehend it in terms of experimental context, and interpret it in relation to their own needs and goals. Reading comprehension is very important for someone who wants to learn English. Reading comprehension is essential for students learning English as a foreign language, and students' ability to comprehend a text is required (Riung, et.al 2022). In line with that according to Tangiduk, et.al (2021), comprehension is "making sense of what one reads and connecting the ideas in the text to what one already knows". Reading comprehension is the process of comprehending a written text. The process includes three critical components: skill, experience, and knowledge.

The teaching methods used in the classroom have an impact on students' reading comprehension. Teaching should be fun. According to Mudjiono & Dimiyati (2013) stated that the educational process includes students, teachers, themes, methods, media, assessment, and learning objectives. These are referred to as the components of the learning process. Based on these components, one of the elements of the educational process is the teacher. The technique can encourage students to participate more actively and manage the classroom environment in a way that is friendly to learning. Small group discussion as a learning strategy that allows students to communicate with their peers and involve students more deeply in the teaching and learning process (Djamarah, 2006). This method can enhance a comfortable teaching and learning environment and ensure better results for students. Groups are formed to improve students' ability to solve problems, communication skills, cooperation, and participation in decision-making.

In teaching and learning reading comprehension, Small Group Discussion can be used as a method to engage students in the process of learning to read because Small Group Discussion includes peer feedback from classmates which can help students know their strengths and weaknesses, and help them evaluate their reading ability. According to Rizwan & Rachmijati (2021) stated that small group discussion is a learning method that allows students to be more active by interacting with their classmates. Learning in a group setting can make learning more efficient and enjoyable. Working with others allows students to pool their ideas and see problems from different points of view (Lumentut & Lengkoan, 2021). In a group environment, students can attempt tasks that cannot be completed by an individual, combining different skills and expertise to tackle

more complex and large-scale problems. When time is limited, group work allows for more in-depth and extensive analysis than if they were working individually (Andries. et.al, 2019).

In summary, the literature shows that most of the previous studies focused on students' perceptions on the use of group discussion in reading instruction (Riung. Y, Liando. N. V, & Posumah. J, 2022), effectiveness and students' engagement in improving students' reading comprehension by using small group discussion (Setianingsih. H, & Harahap. D. I, 2020; Alviani. V, & Saragih. W 2022; Usu. T, & Adi. A, 2021; Rahmat. A, 2017), Students' experience of the development of emotional engagement (Ulmanen. S, et.al 2016). Although the results of the research show that it improves students' reading comprehension by using small group discussion, the description of how students' emotional engagement in reading comprehension learning through small group discussion still needs to be reported. To fill this gap, this study engaged students in learning reading comprehension through small group discussion.

2. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to get more detailed and in-depth data on how does students' emotional engagement in learning reading comprehension through small group discussion. Data collection used observation and interview. Then, data analysis refers to Braun & Clark (2006) using thematic analysis. The setting was carried out at a junior high school in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia. That's school was selected based on the experience of the preschool services teacher program. The research was conducted in one class there are 38 students in grade 7 consisting of 17 boys and 22 girls and interview data was collected from six students who were voluntarily selected by the class teacher.

Tabel 1. Participant Information

No	Grade	Gender	Categories	Frequency
1		Female	Participants were randomly selected as	2
2	7th	Male	respondents were students who volunteered to be interviewed by researcher	4
Total				6

Tabel 2. Data Analysis

Introduction (familiarization)	In this first step, the researcher begins to re-read the transcripts of the observations results until the researcher recognize and understands the data obtained in the research,
Coding	At this step the researcher assigns codes to the transcripts.
Generating Theme	The researcher then began to look for themes from some of the existing codes
Reviewing Theme	The researcher review the themes that have been obtained.
Defining Theme	The researcher gave a name to the findings after determining the theme.
Summarizing (Writing)	The researcher begins to write the results that have been obtained.

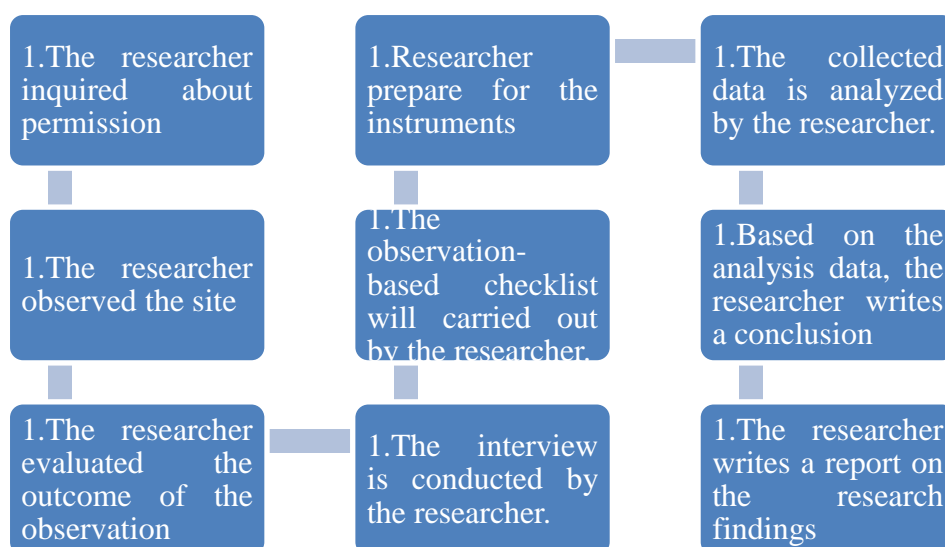


Figure 1. Research Procedure

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of observations and interviews, there are general pattern findings from this research, namely students' emotional engagement response to small group discussion in the context of reading comprehension and teacher engagement is influential in directed students during small group discussion in the context of reading comprehension. These two themes will answer the following research question: How does students' emotional engagement in learning reading comprehension through small group discussion?

- a. Students' emotional engagement response to small group discussion in the context of reading comprehension

Observations and interviews with students focused on obtaining data related to how students' emotional involvement in learning reading comprehension through small group discussions. Based on the information obtained from the researcher's observation, it can be seen that students are enthusiastically involved in learning through small group discussions by compactly sharing tasks and effort students bring dictionaries, after completing the learning process students are also seen competing to convey the answers to the results of discussions with their groups with a strong sense of confidence. In addition, based on information obtained from student responses (interviews), it was identified that there were several student responses that influenced students' emotional involvement. In this case students have an interest in learning small group discussions, can better understand the material because students are involved in learning by using small group discussions, the reason is because working together with friends makes

students more active in discussions and more confident in expressing their ideas. This is reinforced by student responses. This is reinforced by students' response:

My desire to be engaged in discussing exchanging ideas with friends and cooperating well in understanding the material is quite large (Student 1)

I feel comfortable learning using small group discussion because I can share the task with my friends, understand the material, and remember it easily because my friend help me (Student 2)

I feel interested in learning using small group discussions, and I agree that small group discussions are always applied in learning reading comprehension (Student 3)

Based on students' statements, the use of small group discussions in reading comprehension can engaged students' emotional engagement in learning reading comprehension because with small group discussions it is seen that students are interested and feel comfortable and also want to be more engaged in group discussions exchanging ideas with their peers without feeling shy. As for other student response regarding the use of small group discussion in the context of reading comprehension, small group discussion in reading comprehension makes students unfocused because there are some students who joke and disturb their friends during the discussion, also makes students feel bored because they only discuss with their classmates. This is supported by students statement:

In my opinion, learning by using small group discussions feels monotonous and boring because friends are just the same, sometimes friends cannot be invited to discuss. And I also feel less focused on studying because many of my friends are chatting and joking so I can't focus on the material being discussed (Student 4)

The conclusion from the students' statements above is that although the use of small group discussions gives one negative response from students, namely monotony and making students unfocused because they are in groups with friends who like to joke, most students see small group discussions on the positive side that small group discussions have a good impact and can encourage students' emotional engagement with reading comprehension learning.

- b. Teacher role is influential in directing students during small group discussion in the context of reading comprehension

Based on the second finding, the teacher's role in influencing students during the small group discussion process has an impact in the form of discussions becoming more conducive, directed, and students understand the material better. This statement is supported by the answers from student interviews:

I think it is influential because the role of the teacher in the classroom when learning the takes place makes my group discussion directed and teacher can help in explaining the material that is not understood (Student 5).

Very influential, with the presence of a teacher the class becomes more conducive (Student 6)

To conclude the second finding, based on the results of student statements it can be seen that the teacher who was there at the start of learning with small group discussions in context reading comprehension, always went around to help conduct the class and help students to better understand the material making students more open to actively asking questions and not being shy about conveying their ideas. therefore teacher role affects students' emotional engagement in the context of reading comprehension.

Discussion

One important aspect of learning reading comprehension through small group discussion in junior high school is the opportunity to work as part of a group. Small group discussion can encourage students' emotional involvement by making students become more interested and comfortable in relaxed and fun learning, students are also more active in discussing with their group mates, and more confident when presenting their ideas. In line with the statement, group work allows students to pool their ideas and look at problems from different perspectives in group situations students can try tasks that cannot be done by individuals (Riung. Y, et.al, 2022). In addition, they can also shorten the time when doing tasks from the teacher, because they can work together and share tasks with their groupmates. Group work can be applied when they work within a limited time frame, group work allows for a deeper and broader analysis than if they work individually. According to Kagan, S. (2007), Small Group Discussion can be an efficient tool in the use of time in the classroom and he explains that when students are divided into small groups, learning time can be optimized with more focus and direction.

Small group discussions allow each group member to contribute actively, share knowledge, and discuss different viewpoints effectively. Most students believe that they are satisfied with their engagement in small group discussions, students feel that they participate well in group discussions to develop their own English language skills and are motivated to engage in small group discussions, (Alviani. V, & Saragih .W, 2022). Students feel comfortable with their engagement in small group discussions and students are confident enough to participate in group discussions, this is supported by a statement from Cohen (1994) which states that Small Group Discussions create a more familiar and safe environment for students. In small groups, students can interact with their peers more closely without the pressure of the whole class. That's creates a sense of trust and comfort that allows students to express their ideas more freely.

In the application of small groups in the classroom, there are also shortcomings that students feel during learning, namely lack of focus in learning because their groupmates joke and chat a lot which makes students feel distracted. In addition, another shortcoming seen in students' statements is because they only discuss with their roommates (not changing groups) which makes these students feel bored, in this section the teacher should pay more attention to the procedures for implementing small group discussions, one of which is changing groups. Moving groups needs to be done so that students do not feel bored working with the same

friends, this is supported by Phuc (2016) who states that just because we put students in groups at the beginning of an activity does not mean they have to stay in one group until the end, so groups can change while the activity is in progress. The essence of the theory explaining the principle of Small Group Discussion is that when using this method, teachers should form groups randomly, and groups should take turns so that more knowledgeable students can share their knowledge with those who are less knowledgeable.

Students' statements about teacher role affect students' emotional engagement as well as the role of peers. The teacher's presence in class at the beginning of learning makes the class more conducive and teachers who are open (friendly) to their students also have an impact on students' emotional attachment, based on students' statements they become more confident to actively interact with their teachers and better understand and easily remember the material delivered by the teacher. This is supported by a statement from Ulmanen (2016) Students' emotional engagement in relationships with positive teachers can produce supportive responses from teachers that affect student learning outcomes, student emotional engagement is also usually considered as a mediator between teacher-student relationships and academic outcomes. Teacher sensitivity, interest in student development, ability to understand students' perspectives, and respectful and fair treatment of students are central to the teacher's role in engagement to encourage students' emotional engagement in small group discussions in the context of reading comprehension.

This research may be biased if it is based on research conducted by Christianti. J.H, Pradana. D.A, et.al (2023) & Rahmat. A, (2017). This study was conducted with observation and interview in junior high school, while the previous study was conducted with pre-test and post-test in senior high school. However, this research continues deeper into the research of Usu. T, & Adi. A, (2021) which showed results regarding learning reading comprehension using small group discussion. In this study, students' emotional engagement was found to be boosted by the implementation of small group discussion and teacher role was also identified to affect students' emotional engagement in learning.

4. Conclusion

The researcher made a decision to examine how students' emotional engagement in reading comprehension learning through small group discussion with the aim of describing how students' emotional engagement in using small group discussion as a means of teaching reading comprehension is fun for students in class. By using small group discussion method, students' confidence can be trained by the way they dare to convey their ideas in front of their peers. Furthermore, the small group discussion method also makes it easier for students to better understand and remember a material because they can exchange ideas with their groupmates. In addition, with the small group discussion method, students can also train their cooperation and cohesiveness with their classmates. The teacher's involvement in small group discussions also makes students more interactive with the teacher. In

short, the small group discussion method can encourage students' emotional engagement in learning reading comprehension as seen in the statements of students who are interested and comfortable and wish to continue learning reading comprehension using the small group discussion method.

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