

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses six points related to the research introduction. The first point is background of the research explaining the reasons why this research is conducted. The second is identification of the problems which elaborates some problems. The third is delimitation of the problem in which the researcher limits the scope of this research. The fourth point discusses the research questions. The fifth point states objectives of the research. The sixth point elaborates significance of the research.

Background of The Research

Reading is an important aspect in learning since it is a receptive skill that students use to get inputs. There are some learning sources which require reading skill like textbooks, journals, passages, and many more. In order to make the best out of the learning, students need to acquire inputs and information accurately from above learning sources. Thus, reading comprehension plays important role to succeed their learning. According to Kocisky et. al (2018), reading comprehension requires joining data and thinking around occasions, substances, and their relations over a full archive. In this case, students have to be able to connect each word that they read to be a complete information.

Reading comprehension can be a real challenge for English Foreign Language students since most of their reading sources are in English. For those who are lacking vocabulary, they need more time to find the meaning of unknown

words before proceeding to comprehend the whole passage. According to Hamra and Syatriana (2010), a lot of students can recognize words and know how they are articulated, but they don't know their meanings. In addition, there are also terms, idioms, or metaphors that they should understand to ensure that the information that they get is still in context. It is easier to comprehend something when it is written in students' first language compared to the one written in their foreign language. The challenges do not only come from the comprehending process itself, but also other aspects related to English proficiency.

Students' abilities in reading comprehension are different from one to another depends on their proficiency level. When teachers use textbook as a learning source, they have to ensure that all students can understand what they read so the material can be learnt successfully. There are some methods that teachers can apply to support the students' in acquiring information from what they have read. According to Cotterall (1990), students who are required to read in L2 can found some difficulties, thus teachers can use some methods to help them overcome the difficulties. The most common one is to discuss it together on a classical setting. At this point, teachers give their students some time to read the material then discuss it together. Students can also ask if there are some parts of the reading that they do not understand. However, teachers tend to dominate this kind of discussion since they have to explain everything to ensure that the students do not miss a point. In addition, there are few students who might feel shy to ask about what they do not understand. Thus, there should be a method to

enhance students' reading comprehension that still involves their critical thinking by actively participate in a discussion.

Small group discussion is one of the methods that students can use to enhance their reading comprehension. According to Siswanti (2012), students' reading comprehension can be improved by implementing small group discussion. It can be done by splitting a class to some small groups. Each member of the small group are free to share their opinion or information that they get through the book. This can be a great solution for students who are struggling to comprehend a passage because of vocabulary lacking or other challenges. Thus, students can get deeper information about what they have read by doing small group discussion.

The researcher experienced in joining a course which involve reading comprehension. During the course, the teachers gave the students some time to read, then they were divided into some group to have a small group discussion. The group was consisted of four to five students which were chosen by counting numbers then they were grouped based on the number that they got. During the small group discussion, each of the student were given the chance to share their understanding towards the reading. In this case, they are completing each other by giving information based on their understanding. The students were also more confident to ask questions since there were only few members of the group. Finally, at the end of the course, the teacher asked the representation of the group to retell what have been discussed. At this point, there were varied information from each group and the teacher guide them to get the most accurate information.

Above method can be effective to overcome the problems that students' have related to reading comprehension. The most common one is lacking vocabulary which obviously limits students' comprehension towards their reading. Another problem that often to be happened is students' proficiency level. Even if they know all vocabulary in their reading, it takes a good critical thinking to connect all the information to be a whole. In a regular class setting, students usually ask their teacher about things that they do not understand. However, another problem might occur regarding this situation. Firstly, not all students have enough courage to ask question in classical setting, so they decided to be quiet. Secondly, students cannot get deeper understanding since the teacher is the only learning source for all of them.

Based on above experience, the researcher is attracted to conduct a study for reading comprehension and small group discussion. The researcher perceives that there are some students who are struggling with reading comprehension. In addition, small group discussion is an interesting method that can be used to help students to overcome their difficulties in reading comprehension. The researcher desires to find out students' perception on the implementation of small group discussion including the benefits that they get from it and also the challenges that occur during its implementation. Thus, from above background, this study was conducted.

Identification of The Problems

Reading comprehension is an important aspect in learning because some learning sources depends on it. English foreign learners face some difficulties in

doing it since most of their material are written in English. In order to ensure that students understand what they have read, teachers need to find a way to help them overcome the difficulties. One of the method that can be used is by applying small group discussion where students share their thought about the reading.

Applying small group discussion can be beneficial for the students since they can have focused discussion. In addition, they can be more flexible in asking questions about things that they do not understand. However, even if each student is given the same amount of time to read something, the result will be different concerning about their varied proficiency level. There can be challenges in doing small group discussion because of the proficiency gap. In addition, since the groups are chosen randomly, there is possibility that a whole group consist of students with low proficiency level, thus it is hard for them to complete each other information. Problems can also come from students' preferences. There might be some who prefer classical setting in which the teacher become the center point of the discussion.

Delimitation of The Problem

There are so many aspects that can be discussed related to this research, however, the researcher limits the problems which are going to be identified. This research only focuses to find out the benefits and also challenges that the students perceive towards their reading comprehension by doing small group discussions. Other aspects which do not have any correlation with it will not be discussed in this research. There are any issues related to small group discussions, however, it

will not be analyzed in this research if it is not related to students' reading comprehension.

The researcher has some reasons for limiting this research only to certain points. The first one is time constraint in which the researcher has limited time to conduct this research. The second one is because the researcher is interested to conduct a study related to above issue, thus the researcher only want to foc.us on it to get deep and rich data.

Research Question

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the problems of this research as follows:

1. What are the benefits of small group discussion on reading comprehension as perceived by the students?
2. What are the challenges of doing small group discussion on reading comprehension as perceived by the students?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the benefits of small group discussion towards student's reading comprehension.
2. To identify the challenges of implementing small group discussion to enhance students' reading comprehension.

Significances of the Research

The research is aimed at giving benefits to several parties. The parties are the teachers, the students, and future researchers.

For the teachers. This research can be used as guidance in helping the teachers to decide whether small group discussion is beneficial for the students or not. By knowing the student's perceptions of small group discussion towards their reading comprehension, it will help the teacher in making the most out of the method.

For the students. By knowing the benefits and the challenges in implementing small group discussion, the students will have a review about the method. They can use this research as a guide for them in implementing the method.

For future researchers. This research helps future researchers in conducting their research by giving them ideas on topics for research. They can also take benefits from this research by using it as one of their references when conducting similar studies. The findings of this research can be used as additional information for them who focus on conducting research in the same field.