TurnitinImprovingEightGraders ReadingComprehension

by Lamhot Naibaho

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EFL Theory & Practice: Voice of EED UKI

English Education Department (EED) Collegiate Forum 2015-2018

Editor
Parlindungan Pardede

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PREFACE

English Education Department Collegiate Forum (EED CF) is an academic forum organized by the English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia (EED FKIP UKI). Initiated in 2008 by Mr. Parlin Pardede Dean of FKIP UKI, the event was held bi-monthly in every even moth. It aims at providing a friendly and open opportunity for the faculty, students, alumni, and English teachers to share ideas, research findings, and experiences in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field. It is expected that the forum can cater the interested parties an innovative and exciting opportunity to share, care, and collaborate for developing their professionalism in EFL learning and teaching.

Following related parties' recommendation, staring from 2015 the papers presented in the forum will be compiled and published in a proceeding in every four years. This proceeding, therefore, includes the 24 articles presented in the forum from 2015 to 2018. Since the presentation in this forum is voluntary, every resource person is free to decide the EFL topic he or she presents. Consequently, the articles in this volume cover a broad theme. Despite the broad theme, the topics covered in the articles do represent current hot issues in EFL, such as learning and teaching methodology and strategies; language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar development; curriculum, evaluation and assessment matters; language research methodology, and the implementation of technology in EFL.

On behalf of EED FKIP UKI, I would like to offer my appreciation all faculties, students, alumni, and fellow English teachers who had contributed in EED CF along 2015-2018. My special thanks should go to Parlindungan Pardede whose hard work in editing the articles in this proceeding has made this publication possible.

Finally, I hope each article in this proceeding can inspire every reader as it had inspired the audiences when it was presented in EED CF.

Jakarta, July 26, 2019
English Education Department Chairperson,

Hendrikus Male

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Improving Eight Graders' Reading Comprehension Using Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) at SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus[1]

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Abstract

This study employed an action research design which was carried out in two cycles. Conducted from March to May 2015. It aimed at improving students' reading comprehension skill through Students Team Achievement Division (STAD) technique. The participants were 37 eight-graders of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius III, North Jakarta. During the implementation, quantitative data were collected using tests, and qualitative data were collected using diary notes, questionnaire, and observation sheets. The obtained data were analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique. The results revealed that the implementation of STAD technique improved students' reading comprehension. It was proved by the increase of the mean scores from the pre-test to post-test 1 and post-test 2, which were respectively 53.51, 64.84, and 77.57. Moreover, the qualitative data obtained through the diary notes, questionnaires, and observation sheet revealed that the participants showed great interest in learning reading through STAD. Based on the finding of the research, teachers are recommended to apply STAD technique as an alternative to improve students' reading comprehension.

Key Words: action research, STAD, reading comprehension

INTRODUCTION

In the learning of English as a foreign language (EFL), mastering reading is one of the most important objectives. For all individuals, English reading skills open up their views of the new world and abundant opportunities. The ability to read English texts does not only allow them to acquire new knowledge, keep on being updated with the information and technology, enjoy literature, communicate with people from other nations, and carry

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out their daily work which is an indispensable part of modern life, such as reading the newspaper, registering the job, instructing manuals, and maps (Pang, 2003). In addition, reading is fundamental to function in today's society and a vital skill in finding a good job. It also develops the mind and the imagination and helps discover new things (Davis, 2012).

For EFL learners, reading is the most vital skill to acquire because of several reasons. First, students can usually perform at a higher level in reading than in any other skills, and this will increase their motivation to learn. Second, reading requires very minimum necessities. Different from speaking which requires opportunities to interact with sparring partners, or from writing which needs a lot of guidance and time to practice, reading necessitates only a text and motivation. Third, it is a service skill. After learning how to read effectively, students will be able to learn effectively by reading (Pardede, 2010). Reading is the key channel and the main source for second or foreign language input. By reading, EFL learners can enrich their knowledge of the grammar, discourse structure, and vocabulary of the new language. Krashen and Brown (2007) emphasized that reading is the most important skill among the four language skills as it can improve overall language proficiency.

Although reading is very essential in education and in real life as well, most EFL students have low motivation to read because they find reading very troublesome to master. Deporter and Hernacki (1999) stated students are anxious to read so that many of them found reading very difficult. In Indonesian context, Kweldju (1996) found that although students realized reading usefulness, they are not interested to read textbooks due to their inadequate prior knowledge, inability to comprehend the reading texts, and complex structure of the textbooks. In addition, Fitrawati (2009) stated that many learners face difficulty in understanding textbooks in English. The eighth graders of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius III also faced problems in reading. In daily learning, they seemed uninterested in reading English texts. Based on an observation in the English class of the eighth grades at the school and an interview with the English teacher, most students seemed to have problems in the five reading comprehension aspects (determining the main idea, getting specific information, referencing, inferencing, and getting the meaning of vocabulary). They also felt discouraged when encountering a longer text. Based on the observation and interview, the researchers realized that these problems arose due to the fact the class was dominated by the teacher-centered approach. While teaching, the teacher merely explained the material and asked the students to read and answer the questions individually. The students seldom worked in groups and tended to be passive. Realizing the condition, the researchers intended to use the Students Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) techniques to develop the students reading comprehension.

The underlying reasons for choosing this technique was that STAD can motivate, support, and help students in learning activities (Slavin, 1994). In addition, STAD is advantageous for both students and teachers. STAD is beneficial to students because it can (1) create conditions leading to positive achievement outcomes by directly teaching students structures methods of working with each other or teaching strategies closely related to the instructional objective (especially for teaching reading comprehension

skills), (2) increase self-esteem and improve ethnic relation, and (3) lead to higher achievement, especially for low achiever. (Slavin, 1995). Hamm and Adams (1992) identified three benefits of using STAD for teachers: (1) teachers become more cooperative in their own professional interactions and more willing to collaborate with their peers, (2) teacher's time is spent more effectively; teachers can adopt a fresh, new attitude toward their job, and (3) teachers have a greater time to validate their own, values and ideas.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Reading Comprehension
Reading comprehension is essentially the process of understanding and interpreting texts in order to get some specific or detail information. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 9) stated that reading is the ability to draw meaning from the written text and interpret it appropriately. They argued that the reading process involves a number skills, such as word recognition and syntactic processing which enables the reader to anticipate text information, select key information, mentally organize it, summarize it, monitor comprehension, repair comprehension breakdowns, and match comprehension output to readers' goals. Thus, reading is an active, not a passive process. In reading, the reader's job is not only to understand and receive the message or meaning embedded by the author. Otherwise, the reader "constructs" meaning based on information s/he gathers from the text. Maria (1990) posited that reading comprehension is a "…holistic process of constructing meaning from written text through the interaction of (1) the knowledge the reader brings to the text, i.e. word recognition ability, word knowledge, and knowledge of linguistic conventions; (2) the reader's interpretation of the language that the writer used in constructing the text; and (3) the situation in which the text is read. (p. 14-15). This is supported by Murcia and Olshtain (2000, p. 119) by stating that in reading, the reader attempts to understand and interpret the ideas conveyed by the writer through the texts. The reader decodes the message by recognizing the written signs, interpret the message by assigning meaning to the string of words and understand what the writer's intention was.

To be able to effectively get the meaning of the text, readers should fulfill three things: (1) identify and understand the words in the text or words recognition, (2) construct and understand the words, and (3) coordinate the words and interpret them so that there is an accurate understanding. Leipzig (2001). This is in line with Nation (2001: 339) and Richard and Bamford (as cited in Harmer (2001: 210) who stated that a text can be understood by the reader when it is written using specialized vocabulary and grammar that exist at the level of the readers' ability. Therefore, to make sure that students can read effectively, Brown (2004, p. 206) suggested the teacher include their understanding of the basic ideas, expressions, idioms, phrases in context, grammar, supporting ideas, and vocabulary in the evaluation of reading skills.

Heilman et.al (1981:246) identifies four reading comprehension levels: literal, interpretative, critical, and creative. Literal comprehension involves acquiring information that is directly stated. Thus, the reader aims only to understand the information explicitly stated in the texts, and the reader's understanding could be evaluated by checking his

ability to recognize and recall facts; identify the main idea and supporting details; categorize, outline, and summarize the information. Interpretive reading concerns with what the author means by what is said. Thus, it requires the reader to read between the lines and make inferences about things not directly stated. Interpretative reading could also involve interpreting figurative language, drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, determining the mood, and judging the author's point of view. Critical reading, which is defined as "an active and purposeful process of comprehending, questioning and evaluating printed material and in order to react intelligently to the writer's ideas (Pardede, 2007), concerns with why the author says what he or she says. To read critically, the reader should use some external criteria from his/her own experience in order to evaluate and judge the quality of the information, the values of the writer's use of language, and the writer's reasoning, simplifications, and generalizations. In short, the reader should react emotionally and intellectually to the texts. Creative comprehension involves formulating and rethinking ideas. It requires the reader's involvement with the information presented as he uses it to formulate or rethink ideas of his own, his skills to understand implied and inferred meanings and to evaluate and appreciate reactions.

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)

Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD), devised by Robert Slavin and his associates at Johns Hopkins University (Innovative Learning, 2009), is a collaborative learning method in which small groups of learners with different ability levels cooperate to achieve a shared learning goal. In STAD implementation, students are assigned to four or five-member learning teams that are mixed in performance level, gender, and ethnicity (Slavin, 1994). Most of the time, the teacher presents a lesson. Later, the students were told to work within their teams to make sure that all team members master the lesson. All students are required to help each other using multiples learning resources such as online, mobile learning applications, books, maps and many other sources that are comfortable for them to enhance group discussion and develop creativities (Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013). Finally, all students take individual quizzes on the material they have learned from their previous task and group members. Since this is an individual evaluation, the students may not help one another. Students' quiz scores are compared to their own past averages, and points are awarded on the basis of the degree to which students meet or exceed their own earlier performance. These points are then summed to form team scores, and teams that meet certain criteria may earn certificates or other rewards.

STAD has been used in a wide variety of subjects, from mathematics to language arts to social studies, and have been used from second grade through college. This strategy is most appropriate for teaching well-defined objectives with single right answers, such as mathematical computations and applications, language usage and mechanics, geography and map skills. It can also be easily adapted for use with less well-defined objectives by incorporating more open-ended assessments, such as essays or performances (Adesoji & Ibraheem, 2009).

Several studies have been conducted on the implementation of STAD to develop students' reading comprehension. Wichadee (2006) studied the effects of cooperative learning using STADS on English reading skills and attitudes of the first-year students at Bangkok University. She found that students obtained higher reading comprehension scores and most of them rated positively in cooperative learning. Rahvard (2010) examined the relationship between cooperative learning strategies and reading comprehension of EFL students in some English Institutes in Iran. He found that the group taught using cooperative learning strategies achieved higher result than that that was taught with another strategy. Resmi, Wijaya & Suhartono (2012) carried out an action research in three cycles to improve eight grade students' reading comprehension on recount text, especially main idea, supporting detail, vocabulary, and making inference through STAD technique. The results indicated the students'' reading comprehension on recount text improved.

Based on the discussion in the introduction and literature review sections above, the present researchers were interested to implement STAD to improve the reading comprehension of the eight grade students' at SMP Strada Santo Franciscus, North Jakarta. Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions: (1) Can STAD implementation improve the students' reading comprehension? (2) How does the implementation of STAD develop the students' reading comprehension?

METHOD

This study was an action research and carried out by using STAD technique in teaching reading comprehension. This research was carried out within two cycles from March to May 2015. The participants were 37 eight grade students of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus III.

The data was collected using test and non-test techniques. The test technique was a pre and two posttests used to measure the reading comprehension achievement of the participants. The pre-test was administered before the action, while the first posttest (posttest I) was conducted at the end of cycle 1, and posttest II, at the end of cycle 2. The non-test is a questionnaire and observation sheet. The questionnaire was used to collect data concerning the response of the students of the using of mind mapping. The questionnaire was administered three times, i.e. before the action research, at the end of cycle 1, and at the end of cycle 2. The observation sheet was used by a collaborator to record the activities and. All data were analyzed employing the descriptive analysis technique. The success indicator of this action research was the participants' achieving of the mean score of 70.

FINDING
Initial Condition

As shown by the results obtained by the participants in the pretest (Table 1), before participating in the action research, none of the participants got an excellent level of performance in reading comprehension; only less than a quarter of the participants (21.62%) had good level performance, and the rests got low and fair category.

Table 1.

Score Range of Students' Pretest

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Score
Excellent	85 – 100	0	0	
Good	65 – 84	8	21.62 %	53.51
Fair	45 – 64	17	45.95 %	
Low	0 – 44	12	32.43 %	
Total		37	100%	

In addition to the participants' poor reading comprehension performance, most of the students also found reading comprehension and the skills related to it difficult. Based on their responses to the questionnaire administered before the action research, more than 86% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed that reading comprehension is easy, and only less than 10% agreed reading comprehension skills easy to apply (see table 2).

Table 2.

Data Obtained through the Pre-Action Questionnaire

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Reading comprehension is easy	0	4 (13.5%)	12 (43.2%)	16 (43.2%)
2	Comprehending text is easy.	0	4 (10.8%)	13 (40.5%)	15 (48.6%)
3	Identifying topics, main ideas, supporting details, references, and vocabulary is easy.	0	3 (8.1%)	11 (35.1%)	18 (54.1%)

Report of Cycle I

1. Planning

The plan of cycle 1 was focused to overcome the problems discovered during the initial observation and the results of the pretest and information obtained from the questionnaire administered in the pre-cycle. As previously described, that the participants generally had poor performance in reading comprehension and found reading comprehension and the skills related to it difficult.

2. Action

The actions of Cycle 1 were conducted in two sessions, on March 24 and 27, 31 and April 3, 7, and 10, 2015. Each session lasted in 100 minutes. The first session began by asking the students to do the pretest and fill in the questionnaire. After that, the procedure of learning using STAD technique was introduced to the students. A simulation of STAD was also conducted to make sure every student could participate in it in the coming sessions. The real learning using of reading comprehension through STAD began on March 27, 2015. Teacher's presentation, group discussion, individual test, score calculation and certificates giving were completely conducted. That first class

could run quite well although some of the students still seemed hesitant participating in the learning process.

The same procedure was done in the next meetings. As the students could participate better and better, the action research ran better and better from session to session. At the end of the sixth meeting, the students did posttest I and filled in a questionnaire.

3. Observing

As shown by Table 3, the learning activities through STAD in cycle 1 managed to improve the participants' reading comprehension. After completing cycle 1, only 8.11% of the students got the low-level score, and more than 50% had got a good level score. The mean score had even increased to 68.4 (from 53.51 in the pretest). However, since the success criteria had not reached yet, cycle 2 was planned.

Table 3.
Score Range of Students' Posttest 1

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Score
Excellent	85 – 100	0	0	
Good	65 – 84	20	54.05 %	64.84
Fair	45 – 64	14	37.84 %	
Low	0 – 44	3	8.11 %	
	Total	37	100%	

In line with the improvement of their reading comprehension performance, the students' view of reading comprehension and its skills also changed. If in the pre-action survey none of the students strongly agreed to the statements that reading comprehension and applying its skills are easy, in the survey at the end of cycle 1 more than 10% of them had strongly agreed to the statement. Overall, almost half of the participants now strongly agreed and agreed to the statements (See table 4). This indicated that the students' view of reading comprehension and its skills had been more positive.

In the survey administered at the end of cycle 1, the students were also asked to put their responses towards the influence of STAD implementation in learning reading comprehension and whether or not STAD technique is easy to put in practice. (See item 4 to 7 in Table 4). Overall, almost half of them strongly agreed and agreed that STAD facilitated and had a positive effect on their reading comprehension. Almost a half of them also strongly agreed and agreed that STAD technique is easy to put into practice.

4. Reflecting

In reflecting stage all data obtained through the observation sheets, the questionnaire, and posttest 1 were evaluated and made as the basis for preparing and planning the next cycle. Based on the evaluation, the researchers found that STAD was very potential to implement to improve the students' reading comprehension. Although cycle 1 was conducted only in five sessions, the participants' reading comprehension

performance had increased quite significantly, their view of reading comprehension had turned to be more positive, and their acceptance of the use of STAD was quite high.

After checking up the data from the observation sheet, it was found that three out of the eight teams formed in cycle 1 did not work optimally. The main cause was that the members of those three groups were students having relatively low interest in reading comprehension. Considering this, the researcher planned to reshuffle the membership of the working groups so that in cycle 2 the working groups would consist of members with mixed gender and reading abilities and interests.

Table 4
Data Obtained through the Questionnaire in Cycle I

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Reading comprehension is easy	6 (16.2%)	10 (27.0%)	10 (27.0%)	11 (29.7%)
2	Comprehending text is easy.	5 (13.5%)	10 (27.0%)	11 (29.7%)	11 (29.7%)
3	Identifying topics, main ideas, supporting details, references, and vocabulary is easy.	4 (10.8%)	9 (24.3%)	12 (32.4%)	12 (32.4%)
4	STAD makes comprehending texts easy.	6 (16.2%)	11 (29.7%)	10 (27.0%)	10 (27.0%)
5	STAD makes reading comprehension easy to learn	5 (13.5%)	11 (29.7%)	10 (27.0%)	11 (29.7%)
6	STAD increases my reading comprehension skills	4 (10.8%)	10 (27.0%)	12 (32.4%)	11 (29.7%)
7	STAD is easy to implement in reading comprehension tasks	7 (18.9%)	11 (29.7%)	10 (27.0%)	9 (24.3%)

Report of Cycle II
1. Planning
As indicated previously, the action plan of cycle two was designed similar to that of cycle 1. However, the membership of the working groups was reshuffled in order to have working groups with members having mixed gender and reading abilities and interests.

2. Acting
Cycle 2 was carried out in four sessions, i.e. on April 17, 21, 24, 28, 2015. The first session was started by overviewing the procedure of implementing STAD and group members reshuffle. The learning process during cycle 2 was more conducive than in cycle 1. The students were also more enthusiastic while working in a group or individually.

3. Observing
As shown by Table 5, the learning activities through STAD in cycle 2 managed to improve the participants' reading comprehension. After completing cycle 2, no more student got a low and fair level score. Almost 17% had even got an excellent level, while the rests got a good level. The mean score had even increased to 77.57.
Table 5

Score Range of Students' Posttest 2

Category	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean Score
Excellent	85 – 100	6	16.22 %	
Good	65 – 84	31	83.78%	77.57
Fair	45 – 64	0	0	
Low	0 – 44	0	0	
	Total	37	100%	

The implementation of STAD in learning reading comprehension in cycle 2 managed to drastically change the students' view of reading comprehension, reading comprehension skills, and the influence of STAD implementation in learning reading,. There was no more student who disagreed to each of the statement (see Table 6). All of them now had a positive view of reading comprehension and the use of STAD to develop it.

4. Reflecting

Based on the data obtained in cycle 2, the researcher reflected that STAD is a very effective tool for improving students' reading comprehension. Although this action research was conducted only in ten weeks, it managed to increase the students' reading comprehension performance and totally changed their views of reading from a negative to a positive one. They were also enthusiastic to learn collaboratively using STAD technique.

Table 6
Data Obtained through the Questionnaire in Cycle 2

| No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	Reading comprehension is easy	14 (37.8%)	23 (62.2%)	0	0
2	Comprehending text is easy.	16 (43.2%)	21 (56.8%)	0	0
3	Identifying topics, main ideas, supporting details, references, and vocabulary is easy.	19 (51.4%)	18 (48.4%)	0	0
4	STAD makes comprehending texts easy.	14 (37.8)	23 (62.2)	0	0
5	STAD makes easy reading comprehension to learn	11 (29.7%)	26 (70.3%)	0	0
6	STAD increases my reading comprehension skills	11 (29.7%)	26 (70.3%)	0	0
7	STAD is easy to implement in reading comprehension tasks	16 (10.8%)	21 (10.8%)	0	0

The results of this study revealed that STAD technique could effectively enhance the students' reading comprehension. Before participating in the action research, the majority of the participants had poor reading comprehension. This was in line with their responses through the pre-action questionnaire which revealed only less than 10%

agreed reading comprehension skills easy to apply. This indicated that the majority had a negative view of reading comprehension. After they participated in the reading activities using STAD in cycle 1, only 8.11% of the students got a low-level score, and more than 50% had got a good level score. Their mean score also increased from 53.51 in the pretest to 64.84 in the posttest. The learning activities in cycle 1 did not only enhance their reading comprehension performance but also change their view.

The implementation of STAD in cycle 2 became more effective after the membership of the working groups was reshuffled so that the members of each group had mixed gender and reading abilities and interests. After completing cycle 2, no more student got a low and fair level score. The mean score also increased from 64.84 in posttest 1 to 77.57 in posttest2. In addition, the data obtained from the questionnaire administered at the end of cycle 2 revealed the whole students now had a positive view of reading comprehension and the use of STAD. By comparing the three mean scores obtained from the three tests assigned in this study (see Figure 1), it is very obvious that STAD is a very effective technique teacher could use to improve the students' reading comprehension. It can be hypothesized that the more skillful the students in implementing the technique, the better their reading performance will be. The implementation of STAD increased the students' engagement in reading and collaboration in learning. Being more collaborative, their learning achievement increased. This is in line with the findings of Rahvard (2010), Wichadee (2006), and Resmi, Wijaya & Suhartono (2012).

Figure 1. **Comparison of the Mean Scores**
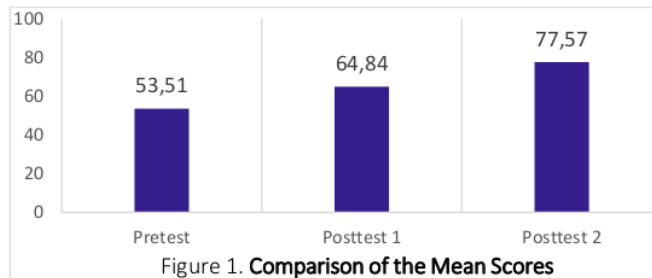
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussion presented in previous sections, it can be concluded that STAD technique was successful to improve the reading comprehension ability of the eight grade students of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius III North Jakarta. STAD implementation also changed the students' negative view on reading English text to the positive one. In relation to this, the researchers suggest teachers use STAD technique as an alternative in teaching reading comprehension.

Since this study was an action research involving a class of eight graders of SMP Strada Santo Fransiskus Xaverius III, the details could not be generalized to other groups of students. Future studies, therefore, are recommended to modify some aspects of the materials, media, and strategy used in this study to suit the conditions of the target group of students.

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