

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer would like to present background, research question, and aim of the study, significance of the study, implications, and applications

1.1 Background

There are four essential skills must be mastered to achieve competence in learning English: Listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Among these, reading receives special attention in the field of second and foreign language learning. Grabe, as cited in Richards, et, al., (2002), stated that since the 1980s, many researchers have conducted studies on reading, both in first and second language contexts. Reading is an important skill that enables students to acquire information and broaden their knowledge. According to Patel, et, al, (2013), reading is a process of understanding the meaning of written symbols in a text. Similarly, Goodman described reading as “a precise process that involves exact, detailed, and sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling patterns, and larger language units.” Moreover, Bojovic (2010) emphasized that reading is a complex activity requiring time and resources to develop, as it involves meaning, interaction, comprehension, and flexibility. Based on these statements, it can be concluded that reading is a process of obtaining information through printed material that involves complex language and cognitive skills.

Reading plays a crucial role in the world of education. Students who develop a reading habit can gain broad benefits from their activities. Through reading, students can acquire extensive knowledge, diverse information, and an expanded vocabulary (Singh, 2014).

Reading is an essential language skill whose primary goal is comprehension. Reading activity is closely connected to understanding, as the ultimate aim of reading is to comprehend the text. Kusdemir. Y.I. Bulut (2010) stated that reading is a process involving several stages, beginning with visual perception, followed by the reception of basic information, and culminating in comprehension within the brain. Furthermore, Uribe, as cited in Afriyeni, et al (2017), explained that reading comprehension is the process of discovering and constructing meaning from the text. Therefore, it can be concluded that reading comprehension occurs when readers successfully obtain and construct the main ideas and information from the written material.

The group work method has long been used in learning English in the classroom. Much research has been done on group work. The researcher has recommended small groups in second language classes. In the implementation of group work, the size of the group plays a very significant role; it can be designed in the form of small groups or large groups. However, this study specifically focuses on the use small groups rather those large groups. There are strong reasons behind this choice. Small groups typically consist of 3 to 5 students, which is considered the idea size for language learning. According to Kondo (2010) and Daba, et, al. (2017), small groups are much more effective because they allow every single student to have greater opportunities to speak, participate actively, and contribute their ideas compared to large groups, there is often a tendency for only dominant students to speak while others rely on their friends, which leads to unequal participation. Therefore, choosing small groups is essential to ensure that all students are actively involved in discussing and analysing the reading text together.

Group work can improve students' abilities if the teacher pays attention to the basics, such as the structure of the assignments given and group negotiating activities that are prepared interestingly. Working in groups is designed to improve students' capabilities, including their capacity to deal with dissatisfaction positively and healthily, work with others, make decisions, and contribute in ways to increase the ability of themselves and the group (Dhawan, 2015). There is a relationship between group work and individual study. Some students can only focus when they are alone and have difficulty studying in groups. The researcher compares individual learners and group work learning in the class. Most students prefer group work; others feel it is unfair because they only rely on a handful of people (Situmorang, 2021). In other words, some students think they need help working with their group mates. Group work activities can facilitate and further motivate students, especially with small groups in classes (Kondo, 2010). Group work can boost the number of speaking activities, improve the quality of student conversation, individualize instruction, create a good environment in the classroom, and develop students' interests. Research presented by Situmorang (2021) found that group work was successfully implemented in EFL students because it provides readiness and increases students' confidence when given individual assignments in the future.

Group work is a teaching method that involves students working in small groups to achieve a common learning goal. This approach enables students to develop essential skill such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. According to Chiriac (2014), group work can be viewed as a comprehensive umbrella concept for various teaching modes, while collaboration is a specific concept that can be included in the broader concept of cooperation. Bentley, et, al (2017) also states that group work offers an effective way for lectures to increase students' engagements, improve the quality and challenge of tasks, and provide opportunities for cooperative learning, while reducing assessments loads. Example of group work include group discussion, group projects, case studies, and role-playing, which can be effective means of applying group work in the classroom. Through group work, students can learn cooperatively, improve the quality of learning, and reduce assessment loads. Additionally, group work can also help students develop leadership skills, manage time and resources, and enhance critical thinking and creativity.

Understanding students' perception of group work in reading classes is fundamentally important because perceptions determines students' attitudes, motivation, and active participation in the learning process. Knowing how students' view this method is the key to determining whether the learning activities will be successful or not. If students perceive group work positively, they will be more engaged and willing to share ideas; conversely, negative perception will lead to resistance and low participation. Therefore, identifying students' views is necessary to adjust teaching strategies and create a learning environment that truly supports their needs.

Furthermore, connecting group work with intensive reading is essential due to the nature of both concepts. As define by Mustofa, et, al (2019), intensive reading focuses on detailed analysis, linguistic feature, and deep text understanding, which often involves complex and difficult vocabulary, clarify confusing sentences, and construct meaning collectively. Thus, group work transforms they heavy and solitary activity of analysing text into a social and interactive process that makes comprehension deeper and easier.

Regarding why the researcher specifically chose the intensive reading course for this study, it is because this subject is considered one of the most fundamental yet challenging courses in the English curriculum. Unlike extensive reading which focuses on pleasure, intensive reading demands critical analysis, detail orientation and deep focus elements that are highly suitable for collaborative learning. Additionally, many students often feel bored or anxious when analysing complex texts alone. Therefore, this course provides the perfect context to intensive how group work can change the atmosphere from passive listening to active engagement, helping students overcome difficulties in understanding texts.

This study is necessary because it can help understand how students perceive the use of group work in intensive reading classes, which can increase students' engagement and improve the quality of learning. By understanding students' perceptions of group work, necessary adjustments can be made to improve the effectiveness of group work. This study can also provide information on how group work can be used effectively in intensive reading classes, thereby developing more effective learning methods that meet students' needs. Additionally, this study can contribute to the development of knowledge on the use of group work in intensive reading classes. These are the reasons why the writer chose this research topic. **“AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF GROUP WORKS IN INTENSIVE READING CLASS AT ARTHA WACANA CRISTIAN UNIVERSITY”.**

1.2 Research Problem(s)

Based on problem identification and analysis, problems can be formulated as follows:

What are students' perceptions of using group work in intensive reading class?

1.3 Aim(s) of Study

The study aims to find out students' perceptions of using group work in an intensive reading class at Artha Wacana Christian University.

1.4 Significance of Study

The benefits obtained in this study are as follows:

1.4.1 Implication

Perceptions of group work should be mentioned, as asserted by Situmorang (2021). Based on findings from intensive reading classes, most students view group work positively as a means to share ideas, clarify difficult concepts, and develop collaborative skills. However, some raise concerns about unequal contribution, scheduling conflicts, and dense course material. Meanwhile, Dhawan (2015) explains that group work has long been a foundational approach in English language learning, with small groups highly recommended for second language classes. The method is designed to enhance students' ability to collaborate, make collective decisions, manage dissatisfaction positively, and support individual and group progress. Its success depends on well-designed assignments and engaging collaborative activities.

1.4.2 Application

The benefits of research on learning using group work in intensive reading class performance on the university campus are:

1. For Students

- a) Students can improve their intensive reading ability through effective group work.
- b) Students develop collaborative skills and learn to communicate ideas about complex texts with peers.
- c) Students build confidence in discussing academic content and asking questions.

2. For the Researchers

- a) Researchers can use the result of this study to improve the quality of research on intensive reading teaching methods and students' perceptions.

- b) The findings can serve as a basis for developing evidence based group work strategies tailored to intensive reading courses.
- c) The research framework can be adapted for studying similar teaching approaches in another language learning classes.