

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an explanation of the research that contains the background of the study, the questions of research, the objectives of the research, the significances of the research, research framework, hypothesis, and previous studies.

A. Background of Study

How important is reading comprehension for students? Reading comprehension is important for students, not only in school but also goes beyond schooling. It becomes an important part of life. Reading is one of the language skills that should be mastered by everyone, that is why reading skills need to be trained since childhood. Every level of reading will be more difficult. In the next level of reading, reading is not only about reading a text or a book, but also understanding the meaning of the text and getting implicit information. Language teachers have a responsibility to teach their students about reading, but the problem is there are a lot of students from different cultures and different backgrounds knowledge. It becomes a challenge for the teacher to teach reading skills to all of the students that have a different level of English skills. The other challenge for the teacher is to face the students who unlike reading. Various kinds of method and technique have been researched, teachers need to know which method that is appropriate with their students to learn about reading.

According to Gilakjani (2017), the main goal of reading is to accept the proper context and information in a text that the writer delivered. She also stated that reading is the meaning process production which consists: (a) existing knowledge of the reader, (b) the information from the text, and (c) the context of reading. In academic content, curriculum, and syllabus 2013 of ninth-grade students stated that comprehending reading text is one of the learning purposes. It showed that the students are hoped to understand or comprehend the various types of English text.

Based on pre-observation to ninth-grade of Junior High School, teachers always use a random shaker for grouping. It makes some students can not learn effectively because they have the same ability partner in their group. It has an impact on the task of the teacher. One of the groups that have all members with low ability students cannot finish the task. Worst, they did not do the task. D'souza (2017) stated that cooperative group interaction helps students feel confident about their abilities. From the pre-observation in Junior High School, creating a cooperative group with random shakers has a chance to make a group that only consists of the low ability students. So that cooperative group should not begin with random shakers.

Separating students into groups should be awarded by the teacher. The ability grouping, divided based on ability, could be less effective and negatively impacted, especially on low-ability students. Anasalone & Ming (2006) stated that ability grouping has disadvantages in self-concept and self-efficacy students. It will influence students' achievement in academic and also will affect their future academic.

Grouping becomes a way to make students learn effectively depends on the condition and ability of students. The aim of a group that can make students learn effectively may become the pressure for some students, to create meaningful learning on grouping, the separation of students must be done properly. It should be planned without random separation. Row (2016) also found that mixed-ability makes students help each other by spreading high-ability students' ability and low-ability students.

There are several previous studies related to the effectiveness of mixed-ability grouping. The first research was conducted by Madeline Elizabeth Row in 2016. She compares the effectiveness between the same-ability method of grouping and mixed-ability method of grouping and found out that mixed-ability grouping allowed students to feel more relaxed and comfortable learning time. It reflected that this method of grouping less pressure and provides an increased level of confidence and self-esteem. The second research was conducted by Mona Zamani in 2016 showed that students with low abilities can be significantly helped by cooperative learning. Zamani focuses on students writing skills. The third research was conducted by Dr. Giselle D'souza in

2017. His research focuses only on mixed-ability grouping gave a result that mixed-ability grouping holds manifold advantages for both students and teachers in the teaching-learning process. The fourth research was conducted by Karen Murphy in 2017, who compares ability grouping and mixed-ability grouping, also finds that heterogeneous grouping or mixed-ability grouping has a deeper level of basic understanding than homogeneous grouping. Those previous research focused on comparing mixed-ability grouping and ability grouping, while this research focused on how mixed-ability group makes effective learning.

This research discussed reading comprehension, especially in the narrative text, which focused on mixed-ability grouping. This research aims to determine the effectiveness of students' learning using the grouping method based on students' abilities. Students with high reading ability and low reading ability will be in the same group.

B. Research Questions

According to those background study above, this research questions are:

1. What is students' reading comprehension before using mixed-ability grouping in online classroom?
2. What is students' reading comprehension after using mixed-ability grouping in online classroom?
3. What is a significant difference before and after using mixed-ability grouping into students' reading comprehension in online classroom?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the problems above, this study aims :

1. To find out students' reading comprehension before using mixed-ability grouping in online classroom
2. To find out students' reading comprehension after using mixed-ability grouping in online classroom

3. To find out a significant difference before and after using mixed-ability grouping into students' reading comprehension in online classroom

D. The Significance of the Research

The study would be helpful both practically and theoretically.

1. Theoretically, this research hope can be useful and contribute to education, especially in reading comprehension using grouping, and it may support or verify the previous research.
2. Practically, this research hope can help students' reading comprehension, and the result of this research hope can be useful for English teachers.

E. Research Framework

Westwood (2008) stated that reading comprehension is a thinking process that builds more comprehending of concepts and information in the text. In line with Westwood's idea, according to Olson and Diller (1982), reading comprehension is an identity of understanding and implementing the written material's information.

Based on the previous definitions, reading comprehension refers to interaction to obtain information between the reader and the text. The delivery of ideas, opinions, or feelings is an important part of how a writer's thoughts become real. The narrative text is one of the reading comprehension texts that helps students to inform about events in the story chronologically. Minha (2017) stated that narrative text tells a story to the reader for entertainment purposes. The narrative text also informs the reader about an event in the story in detail and chronologically.

According to Kenz and Greg (2000), a group consisting of small members who work together allows them to achieve a mutual goal. Mixed-ability or heterogeneous grouping is one of several kinds in small group discussion. Conklin (2004) stated heterogeneous grouping combines students with varying skill levels. Teachers may be expected to face individuals who have different language skills, different bits of intelligence, different learning speeds, and different learning styles and preferences. The key strategy for managing mixed-ability or heterogeneous

grouping is probably developing a positive and collaborative learning atmosphere in the classroom. Teachers should also involve students in learning and help them overcome the problems they face in mixed-ability using several tips in classroom management. According to Cohen et al. (2002), mixed-ability refers to classes containing a wide range of abilities. It can be assumed that mixed-ability or heterogeneous grouping is the class that includes the varied ability of the students. Every student has a different interest in learning and showing their work. Besides, language background, learning speed, ability, and desire cannot be the same for every student.

Horton (2006) stated that online learning is utilized electronic platforms to giving material of education. Huang et al. (2020) also identified several important aspects to support the effectiveness of online learning, such as managing and developing internet infrastructure, choosing friendly tools, providing interactive resources media, and using various effective techniques.

Based on those statements, technology plays an essential role in this situation. Online learning is the only way to make education keep going. Besides developing several platforms, schools and campuses should fulfill some important points to create meaningful learning.

F. Hypothesis

The hypothesis is a quantitative research statement that presents an independent and dependent variable to get the expected relationship (Creswell, 1994). An alternative hypothesis (H_a) and the null hypothesis (H_0) were used in this research. Since the hypothesis is a temporary theory, it must be tested.

H_a : There was found significant difference in students' reading comprehension before and after using mixed-ability grouping.

H_0 : There was no significant difference in students' reading comprehension before and after using mixed-ability grouping.

G. Previous Studies

Some researchers have researched mixed-ability grouping. They are (1) Madeline Elizabeth Row (2016), (2) Mona Zamani (2016), (3) Dr. Giselle D'souza (2017), (4) P.K. Murphy (2017).

The first research was conducted by Madeline Elizabeth Row (2016). She investigated pupils' experiences, inability, and mixed-ability grouping in an independent secondary girls' school. The research is about students' perceptions exploration to their experiences in mixed-ability and ability grouping. The method which the writer uses is quantitative and qualitative research method. The data source was taken from questionnaires and a focus group involving 260 female students of independent girls' secondary school in West London, aged between 12-16 years old. The result of the research is both mixed-ability grouping and ability grouping have a positive impact. However, it has the most significant aspect in mixed-ability grouping because it created an environment that allowed students to enjoy and be comfortable in their lessons. It also increases the level of students' confidence.

The second research was conducted by Mona Zamani (2016). The research title is Cooperative learning homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping of Iranian EFL learners in a writing context discussed the impact of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping in Iranian EFL learners based on writing ability levels. This research used a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental research design. The collecting data used pre-test and post-test for 104 Iranian female students between 18 and 35. The result of the research is heterogeneous grouping is preferable to a homogeneous group. Since students with low ability more developed their skills when they work with high ability partners.

The third research was conducted by Dr. Giselle D'souza (2017). The title of the study is mixed-ability grouping: making differences count. The research attempted to compare the effectiveness of two grouping strategies in enhancing students' academic achievement in different curriculum subjects. The study used a quantitative research method with a comparative research design. For collecting the data researcher used

493 students at the secondary school. After finished the research, it found that mixed-ability has various advantages for students and teachers.

The fourth research has been conducted by P. Karen (2017). The research title is the influence of homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping on students' text-based discussions and comprehension. The research examines the influence of grouping for students' discourse and comprehension through separated students into two types of groups (homogeneous and heterogeneous group) based on their abilities in oral reading—both quantitative and qualitative research methods used in this research. The researcher used four teachers, 43 students of 4th grade and 53 students of 5th-grade students from elementary schools. The result of the study proved that for students, mixed-ability grouping was advantageous than homogeneous ability grouping

Other researchers have investigated mixed-ability grouping, and all results show that mixed-ability grouping has positive impacts. However, each research has a different object and method. First, the research of Row (2016) used both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This research used only the quantitative research method. Row compares ability grouping and mixed-ability grouping, while this research focuses on the effectiveness of mixed-ability grouping to discuss the system of mixed-ability grouping. Next, Zamani (2016) used a quantitative research method, similar to this research, although Zamani used a quasi-experimental research design that should involve a control group and treatment group. This research which used a pre-experimental grouping only needs one group that is an experimental group. The procedure between this research and Zamani's research is also different. Zamani focuses on writing skills while this research is in a reading context. Then, D'souza's (2017) research used a quantitative research method similar to this research. However, D'souza used a comparative research design that focuses on comparing mixed-ability grouping and ability grouping. This research that used pre-experimental group focuses on mixed-ability grouping only to discuss mixed-ability grouping. D'souza's research process was in offline learning, while this research should be taken

online because it is still a pandemic. Last, Karen (2017) used quantitative and qualitative research methods while only quantitative research methods. Karen compares ability grouping and mixed-ability grouping, while this research focuses on the effectiveness of mixed-ability grouping to discuss the system of mixed-ability grouping.

