

CHAPTER VI: THE CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND IDEAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Chapter V has presented the findings and the discussion regarding the effect of STAD CL and DI on the students' comprehension levels. It has presented the findings and the discussion of the data collected from tests, questionnaires and interview.

This chapter presents the conclusion, the limitation and the ideas for future study. It summarizes the findings and arguments from of the previous chapter. It also depicts the limitation and the ideas for future research.

6.1 Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, this study aimed to investigate how STAD cooperative learning (STAD CL) and Direct Instruction (DI) are implemented in teaching reading comprehension, to find out which instruction is more effective in improving reading comprehension in general and each of the comprehension levels in particular, and what the students' responses are to both STAD CL and DI. Based on previous data and discussions, some conclusions could be drawn as follows.

Firstly, the procedures of STAD and DI were quite similar, consisting of preparation/orientation, presentation, structured/guided practice, and team/independent practice. A quiz, individual improvement and team recognition were included in STAD CL. From the observation, it was found that preparing and ending STAD CL were more demanding for the teacher, however implementing it seemed easier than that of DI. In preparing STAD CL, the teacher needed to group students into heterogeneous but balanced group, based on their previous test scores; and in ending it, the teacher was required to count both individual and team achievement. In implementing STAD CL, the teacher was observed to be more relaxed than implementing DI since he only monitored and gave feedback to the teams, not to individuals as he did in DI. Additionally, the students in STAD CL learned the reading strategies or skills not only from their teacher like those in DI but also from their team mates. These conditions coincide with the principles and the procedures of cooperative learning, as put forward by Slavin (1995; 1989), Johnson & Johnson (1989), Jacob (2004), Sharan (1980 in Sach et al. 2003); Lie (2004); and those of direct instruction as proposed by Adams & Engelmann (1996 in

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Kozloff, 2003), Moore (2008), Kozloff et al. (2001) Lang and Evan (2006) and Arends and Kilcher (2010).

Secondly, regarding the effect of STAD CL and DI on the students' reading comprehension in general, this study shows that STAD CL was more effective than DI in improving their reading comprehension. It can be seen from the result of SPSS independent t-test analysis on the post test scores. It revealed that the t-value was more than .05 as the alpha set ($t = .196$, $df = 61$, $p = .333$) meaning that the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, there was significant difference between the group taught with STAD CL and the one taught with DI in term of reading comprehension in general. This means that the students in STAD CL group outperformed those in DI. This finding supports previous studies related to STAD CL by Jalilifar (2010), Wichadee (2005) and Bejarano (1987) suggesting that applying STAD CL could help students improve their reading comprehension.

Thirdly, regarding the effect of STAD CL or DI on the students' comprehension levels in particular, this study shows STAD CL was more effective than DI in improving literal and evaluative comprehension levels but, on inferential comprehension level, both STAD CL and DI were not significantly different. It can be seen from the result of the independent t-test analyses showing that there was significant difference between the group taught with STAD CL and the one with DI in terms of literal comprehension level with the t-value was .155 ($t = .155$, $d.f. = 61$, $p = .14$) and evaluative comprehension level with the t-value was .617 ($t = .617$, $d.f. = 60$, $p = .131$), both of which more than the alpha (.05). These findings are parallel with the result of previous studies by Jhonson et al. (2000), Norman (2005), Bejarano (1987) and Khan (2008), Bolukbas, et. al (2011). These also coincide with the notions that cooperative learning develops students' critical thinking skills (Richard and Rodgers, 2001 p. 194) and increases their mastery of critical skills (Slavin, 1995 p. 17). On the other hand, in terms of inferential comprehension level, the t-test analysis shows there was no significant difference between the groups with the t-value was .033 ($t = .033$, $d.f. = 61$, $p = .72$), which was less than the alpha. This means that in terms of inferential level, there was no significant different between the group taught with STAD CL and the one taught by DI. This is in line with the previous finding by Pearson and Duke (2002 p. 247) that when teachers provide explicit instruction in the use of comprehension strategies, the students' inferential comprehension improves, regardless of the teaching methods.

Fourthly, the students' responses on the teaching programs were obtained from the questionnaires and interview. From the the questionnaire, the students from both STAD CL and DI groups considered the teaching programs helped them improve their comprehension levels. This can be seen from the fact that the mean scores of the questionnaire in all statements range from 2.74 up to 3.38, meaning that most students responded 'agree' with the facilitation of STAD CL or DI on their comprehension levels. The total mean scores of the responses on the statements about inferential comprehension of both groups (STAD CL group was 3.22 on the positive statements; and was 3.13 on the negative ones and that of DI group was 3.33 on the positive statements; and was 2.85 on the negative ones) were higher than those about literal (the total mean score of STAD CL group was 3.15 on the positive statements; was 2.98 on the negative ones and DI group was 3.16 on the positive statements; was 2.81 to the negative ones) and evaluative comprehension (the total mean score of STAD CL group was 3.05 on the positive statements; was 3.00 on the negative ones and those of DI was 3.23 on the positive statement; was 2.80 on the negative one). These facts indicate that the students were more aware of the effects of STAD CL or DI when they answered the questions about inferential comprehension but were less aware when they answered those about literal or evaluative comprehension. This happened probably because literal questions were considered to be easier than inferential ones, so that they could answer the questions without much effort regardless the instruction effect. This coincides with the claim that literal level only requires recognition and recall of ideas, information and happening explicitly stated in the text (Clymer, 1968 in Pettit and Cockriel 1974, in Hudson, 2007 p. 85; Berry, 2005; Briskin, 2005). Meanwhile, when the students answered the inferential questions level, they realized the effect of STAD CL or DI, since this comprehension level, as claimed by Brasel and Rasinski (2008, p. 17), requires the orchestration and manipulation of information from the text as well as information that resides within the readers. Furthermore, to the evaluative comprehension questions the students had to think over the information both on the text and on their mind. This level is probably so complicated that makes them unaware of the effect of the teaching programs. This is parallel with the claim that evaluative level requires the greatest contribution of the readers (Briskin, 2005) to manipulate information from the text and within the readers (Brasel and Rasinski 2008 p. 17) in making judgment of the content; comparing it with external or internal criteria (Berry, 2005; Burnes, 1985 in Setiadi, 2010 p. 92; Alexander, 1989).

From the interview, it was revealed that the students in both STAD CL and DI groups considered the teaching programs facilitated them to attain their comprehension levels when the teacher modeled the reading strategies, when they read the text and when they had guided exercises. In addition to the facilitation of DI, the students in STAD CL considered STAD CL helped them in comprehending texts when they had team discussion in doing exercises. This is in line with Anderson's (1999 p. 71) claim that the teacher's explanation, examples, monitor and feedback are so important that they enable the students to become aware of the strategies to use their reading strategies/skills (see also Pearson and Duke 2002 p. 247; Arends and Kilcher, 2010 p. 201). This also confirms the importance of guided practices, which enable students to apply the modeled reading skills and allow them to examine and understand the relationship among the skills (Stein et al, 1998 p. 231).

Finally, the data indicated that the reward in STAD CL group could motivate most students to cooperate within their teams as well as to compete with other teams. This condition occurred since all teams and all members had a similar chance to get a reward/recognition. This condition is in line with the belief of motivational theories as claimed by Slavin (1995 p. 15; see also Arend and Kilcher, 2010 p.306; Sharan, 1980 in Sach et al. 2003; Shambaugh and Maliaro, 2006 p. 151) that cooperative task, group goal and reward structure can create a positive environment wherein learners learn to work together, develop cooperation and understanding of others as individuals in achieving joint (group) objectives. On the other hand, in DI group, only high achievers considered the reward could motivate them. Middle and low achievers were not much affected since they realized that they could not win the competition. This supports the claim that the reward in competitive class like DI could not lead to a competitive atmosphere among students, instead, it frustrated other students (Slavin, 1995 p. 16; Lie, 2004 p. 24).

6.2 Limitation of the Study

Apart from the conclusion above, this study has some limitations. They are related to the object of investigation, the instruments, participants and the result of the study.

The first limitation is related to the objects of the study. This study only investigated parts of comprehension levels and the students' responses. This research merely studied literal, inferential and evaluative levels. Reorganization and appreciation levels, as listed in Barret taxonomy of comprehension, were not included. Besides, not all

comprehension skills on the three levels were assessed. There were some other comprehension skills on each level excluded in the study, such as outlining logical organization of text and the development of argument or identifying facts or opinions. Additionally, this study only investigated the student's responses on the STAD CL or DI excluding the teacher's perception on the instructions. The result of the study could be more comprehensive if the teacher's perception on the teaching programs were included.

The second weakness is related to the test items. The number of items for each level of comprehension was only 10. The result might be different if the number of items for each comprehension level were added up to 15 or 20 items. And, the type of test in the study was only multiple choices. Employing other type of items like completion, cloze procedure or memory test might result differently.

The third one was related to the number of participant teacher and students. The present study only investigated one experienced teacher in a school, neither professional nor novice one. Involving more teachers in more schools might strengthen the present findings. In addition, the number and the age of students involved were only 32 students for each group each of which between 13-14 years old. The finding might be dissimilar if the study involved more students in more schools including those 15-18 years old or even adult ones.

The fourth limitation is related to the result of the study wherein the standard deviation in both groups got larger. This deviation means that the range between the low and high achievers became wider after the instructions. This condition is contradictory with the intention of instructions that should improve both the low and high achievers similarly and even eliminate the gap between them. This might be the result of grouping in STAD CL or independent learning in DI. The grouping or the independent learning facilitated the students to improve their achievement in different pace. There should be some efforts to group students so that the gap become smaller or even vanished.

The last weakness of this study is related to the result of the study on inferential comprehension. In this study, the pre-existing ability in this level was not similar. Before the treatments, there was a significant difference between STAD CL and DI groups. This lessens the validity of the study on this level. Having similar pre-existing ability on all levels of comprehension will make the study more valid.

6.2 Ideas for Future Research

Referring the above limitations, some ideas for future research can be suggested.

It will be beneficial if the future research include more comprehension levels and skills and the teacher's perceptions. If all levels and all skills, such as written in Barret's Taxonomy of comprehension, are taken into consideration, the result of the future study will be more thoroughgoing. Besides, future study can take the teacher's perception into account. A teacher perception and comprehension on the teaching programs could determine their classroom application. Therefore, investigating the teacher's perception will be a good idea to conduct.

Besides, the similar study should include more items on every levels of comprehension. More items might generate more comprehensive and valid result. They reflect the real students' ability in reading comprehension. Additionally, other types of items completion, cloze procedure or memory test could be employed to assess the students reading comprehension.

Further, it would be a good idea in the future research, more teachers and more students get involved. To get more convincing result, the future research should randomly select more teachers and more students from more schools including those who were in senior high school or even university.

Regarding the limitation of the result of the study, the future researcher should be cautious in grouping and do extraordinary efforts in trying to decrease or even eliminate the gap between low and high achievers. At least, the next researcher should be able to create the teaching situation wherein all achievers could improve similarly. If it is probable, the low achievers should make better progress.

Finally, the future research should find groups of participants whose pre-existing ability were not significantly different in all level of comprehensions. This would make the study more valid and reliable.