

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE USE OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY AND  
INDIVIDUAL TASK-BASED ACTIVITY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING  
ACHIEVEMENT AT GRADE IX OF SMPN 13 MATARAM**

**I Made Kawiarsa**

English Graduate Department  
Post Graduate Program  
Mataram University  
[kawiarsa@gmail.com](mailto:kawiarsa@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims at comparing the effectiveness of collaborative activity and individual task-based activity in improving the reading achievement of grade IX students of SMP Negeri 13 Mataram. The population of this study was grade IX students of SMP Negeri 13 Mataram in Academic Year 2015/2016. Two classes were chosen as the subjects of this study. Grade IX D consists of 41 students and Grade IX E consists of 39 students. The two classes were treated differently using two different learning activities for their English lesson. Grade IX D applied collaborative activity and Grade IX E used individual task-based activity. Data were taken using pre-test and post-test and the results were analyzed statistically using t-test and z-test at significant level 5%. The data were analyzed using paired sample t-test to measure the significant difference of each activity by comparing the pre-test and post-test of each experimental class to determine the effectiveness of the two activities. It was found that the result of collaborative activity t-test at the significance level 5% was .000. This level was less than 5% (.000<.05). This means that the collaborative activity was an effective activity to improve reading achievement of Grade IX students of SMPN 13 Mataram. The result of Individual task-based activity t-test at the significance level 5% was .000 or lower than 5% (.000<.05). It also means that individual task-based activity was also an effective activity to improve students' reading achievement. Comparing the effectiveness of both activities, the result of Independent test (z-test) at significant level 5% was .016 (.016<.05). This indicated that the two activities had significantly different effectiveness in improving the students' reading achievement at grade IX of SMPN 13 Mataram that is the use of collaborative activity gave more improvement on the students' reading achievement compared to individual task-based activity. Therefore, collaborative activity can be applied in classroom to improve students' reading achievement.

**Keywords:** Collaborative Activity, Individual Task-Based Activity, Students' Reading Achievement.

**STUDI KOMPARASI TENTANG PENGGUNAAN KEGIATAN KOLABORASI DAN  
KEGIATAN INDIVIDU YANG BERDASARKAN TUGAS DALAM  
MENINGKATKAN HASIL BELAJAR *READING* SISWA  
DI KELAS IX SMPN 13 MATARAM**

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian eksperimen ini bertujuan untuk membandingkan efektifitas kegiatan kolaborasi dan kegiatan individu yang berdasarkan tugas dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar *reading* siswa kelas IX SMPN 13 Mataram. Populasi dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas IX SMPN 13 Mataram Tahun Pelajaran 2015/2016. Dua kelas dipilih sebagai subyek dari penelitian ini. Kelas IX D terdiri dari 41 orang siswa dan kelas IX E 39 orang siswa. Kedua kelas tersebut diperlakukan berbeda menggunakan dua kegiatan belajar yang berbeda. Kelas IX D menerapkan kegiatan kolaborasi dan kelas IX E menggunakan kegiatan individu yang berdasarkan tugas. Data diperoleh menggunakan pre-test dan post test dan hasilnya dianalisa secara statistik menggunakan *t-test* dan *z-test* pada tingkat signifikansi 5%. Data dianalisa menggunakan *paired sample t-test* untuk mengukur perbedaan yang signifikan dari masing-masing kelas eksperimen untuk menentukan keefektifan dari dua kegiatan tersebut. Ditemukan bahwa hasil *t-test* kegiatan kolaborasi pada tingkat signifikansi 5% adalah .000. Tingkatan ini lebih rendah dari 5% ( $.000 < .05$ ). Ini berarti bahwa kegiatan kolaborasi merupakan kegiatan yang efektif dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar *reading* siswa kelas IX SMPN 13 Mataram. Hasil *t-test* kegiatan individu yang berdasarkan tugas pada tingkat signifikansi 5% adalah .000. Ini lebih rendah dari 5% ( $.000 < .05$ ). Ini juga berarti bahwa kegiatan individu yang berdasarkan tugas juga merupakan kegiatan yang efektif dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar *reading* siswa. Membandingkan keefektifan dari kedua kegiatan tersebut, hasil dari *Independent test (z-test)* pada tingkat signifikansi 5% adalah .016 ( $.016 < .05$ ). Ini menunjukkan bahwa kedua kegiatan tersebut memiliki efektifitas yang berbeda secara signifikan dalam meningkatkan hasil belajar *reading* siswa kelas IX SMPN 13 Mataram yaitu bahwa penggunaan kegiatan kolaborasi memberikan peningkatan hasil belajar yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan kegiatan individu yang berdasarkan tugas. Sehingga kegiatan kolaborasi dapat diterapkan di kelas untuk meningkatkan hasil belajar *reading* siswa.

**Katakunci:** Kegiatan kolaborasi,, kegiatan individu berbasis tugas, hasil belajar membaca siswa.

## INTRODUCTION

Today our world is surrounded by English either spoken or written. English is around students. Everywhere we go, we may find words, phrases, expressions, or sentences in English. For example when we go to the shopping mall or an airport, we may read these words *sale, discount, departure, arrival*, etc. It is very unfortunate that not all of us understand what the words mean. In other occasions, students found on television at home movies' titles in English and surely it is such a satisfaction for us as English teachers if our students understand what the titles mean.

Reading skill has played a more important role in recent years for many students since the introduction of internet, social media, and information technology. Most high school students are quite familiar with such a thing as *Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, smartphones*, etc. Those media play an important role in bringing English closer to students' lives because of the use of English in their services. Consequently, the English mastery especially reading skill is a must for students not only for facing the National Examination but also as a tool to conquer social media in this digital era.

In reading tasks, students with low proficiencies usually ask their teacher when they find problems. Generally, those problems are about unfamiliar words and expressions used in the text as well as the meaning of the questions following the text. Another effort they do is by asking their friends about the difficult words and expressions. Other students try to use dictionaries to consult any difficult words, but this does not seem to help much because the dictionaries they use are usually the poor ones. Most students commonly ask their teacher when they find difficult words and expressions. However, this habit also causes problems because they only rely on their teacher's explanation for the fact that it is the easiest way to solve their problem.

Reading comprehension requires the reader to know and understand what they are reading. It is not a single step or easily acquired skill, but it is a very complex process that involves other skills. In fact, teachers often find reading comprehension difficult to teach. According to Prado and Plourde (2005), comprehension is a process that involves thinking, past experiences, and knowledge. They believe that the key of comprehension is to know and understand words meaning. In their perspective, it is the interaction among word identification, prior knowledge, comprehension strategies, and engagement.

Teachers need to make efforts to increase their students' reading interest and motivation and at last can improve their reading achievement. Teachers are demanded to create a supporting atmosphere by guiding and performing interesting activities in the classroom to facilitate their students in studying. If teachers can do so, reading class will not be boring anymore and students will be well-motivated in engaging in reading activities in the classroom.

From classroom observation when teaching English and from results of regular examinations such as quizzes, midterm tests, semester test and National Examination (UN), it is found that reading achievement of grade IX students of SMPN 13 Mataram is very poor. It reveals that they have a low ability in answering reading test. The latest result was shown in their semester examination. Their lowest score on the last English National Examination (UN) was only 22.7. This was far lower than the minimum standard score required namely 75. The standard score is the target curriculum that is decided by school in the beginning of school year by considering the input of the students, the complexity of the materials, and the supporting of the school. In addition to the summative and formative tests, an informal oral interview was also administered to investigate the problems they may face in doing and answering reading tests. From the interview, it is found that their problems are mostly about understanding reading

passages and understanding questions following the passages and also about unfamiliar vocabularies used in those reading texts.

It is interesting to conduct a study that aims at improving the students' reading achievement. The application of two different learning activities in teaching reading namely collaborative activity and individual task-based activity is challenging to be investigated. The two activities are chosen since some students prefer small group work and the others prefer individual work when they are doing reading tasks. The two activities are then compared to know which activity is more effective and which one will give better result in improving students' reading achievement.

## **METHOD**

Ravid (2011) defines population as an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one characteristic in common. The research population of this study was the grade IX students of SMPN 13 Mataram in Academic Year 2015/2016. The students were in eight classes (IX A – IX H). The numbers of all students in the eight classes are 329 students.

This study used simple random sampling because every member of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample. Two classes from the population were chosen as the sample of this experimental study. The classes were grade IX D and grade IX E. The numbers of students in grade IX D were 41 and in grade IX E are 39 students. The total number of students involved in this study was 80 students.

Pre-test and post-test were used as data gathering instruments. The pre-test and post-test were given to both experimental classes (IX A and IX B). The instrument used in this study was compiled and modified from grade IX textbooks that match 2006 curriculum and also from some recent National Examination (UN) tests.

The questions for pre-test and post-test were almost the same, the only difference was on the order of the question in the pre-test and post-test. The numbers of pre-test and post-test questions were 40. The questions were in forms of multiple choices. The post-test for two classes were given after treatments to measure their achievement on the reading test. There were six meetings (treatments) for each class; Grade IX D used collaborative activity meanwhile Grade IX E used individual task-based activity. In addition, the meeting for pre-test and post-test were excluded from the treatment meetings.

To ensure the validity and reliability of a test, it had to follow some procedures in its designs. The first procedure was developing the specification of try-out test. The content of the test was intended to appropriately measure the learning indicators stated in the try-out test. 50 multiple choice questions were tried out to the 38 students from grade IX B at the same school. The result of the test was analyzed statistically using the Cronbach *coefficient alpha* on SPSS 16.0 tool to determine the validity and reliability of the test. After that, only 40 valid questions were used as pre-test and post-test.

The scores of pre-test and post-test of the two classes were analyzed using statistical tests to see the significant difference of collaborative activity and individual task-based activity. The statistical tests used were Normality test, Homogeneity test, Paired sample t-test, and Independent test (z-test).

Normality test is aimed at analyzing the data distribution of sample population. The Normality test used in this study was Kolmogorov-Smirnov test by comparing the scores in the sample to a normally distributed set of scores with the same mean and standard deviation. If the test is ( $p > .05$ ), it shows that the distribution of the sample is normal.

In this study, the Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was used. It tests the assumption that each group (category) of one or more categorical independent variables has the same variance on an interval dependent. If the Levene statistic is significant at the .05 level or better, the null hypothesis that the groups have equal variances is rejected. In other word, the data is said homogeneous if the significance of the test is higher than 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The statistic test (t-test) used was paired samples t-test to find out the effectiveness of collaborative activity and individual task-based activity in improving students' reading achievement.

Independent test (z-test) was used to compare the effectiveness of the two activities and to determine which activity was more effective in improving students' reading achievement. SPSS 16.0 tool was used.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are 40 questions out of 50 questions are considered valid because the values of their coefficient alpha ( $r$ ) are higher than the correlation coefficient table ( $p > r$  table) that is  $p > .320$  at significant level 5% (.05). The valid questions were used as pre-test and post-test question for both experimental classes meanwhile the invalid questions were left out.

**Table 1. Reliability Statistics of Try-Out Test**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.732	.899	51

The value of Cronbach coefficient alpha on standardized items is .899. According to Ravid (2011) reliability levels in the .60s may be acceptable for group decisions, although a higher reliability is always preferable for example in experimental studies.

The data distribution of both experimental classes (Collaborative and Individual) is higher than .05. The significance level of collaborative activity is .200 ( $p > .05$ ) and the significance level of individual task-based is .158 ( $p > .05$ ). This means that both of the experimental classes were normal. Therefore, the samples were appropriate to conduct a study because they had a normal distribution.

For Homogeneity test, the significance level of the test is .093. This means that the probability of the data is higher than 5% ( $.093 > .05$ ). Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity test is accepted. That means the pre-test results of both activities are homogenous.

The result of collaborative activity t-test shows that the significance level is .000. This significance level is less than 5% ( $.000 < .05$ ). This means collaborative activity was an effective activity to improve reading achievement of Grade IX students of SMPN 13 Mataram.

The result of individual task-based activity t-test shows that its significance level is .000 or lower than 5% ( $.000 < .05$ ). This means that individual task-based activity was an effective activity to improve the students' reading achievement.

In comparing the effectiveness of the two activities, Independent test (z-test) was used. The result shows that the significance level of the independent test is .016 ( $.016 < .05$ ). This means that there was significant difference between the effectiveness of the use of collaborative activity and individual task-based activity in improving students' reading achievement.

Based on the observation during the study, in collaborative activities, students are active learners and they do constructive process. They shared ideas and thought among group members to solve the tasks given by their teacher. In solving the tasks, individual student in the same group do not compete each other because the assessment is based on the collective work of the respective group. Therefore, students within the same group have to work hand in hand constructively to obtain the same credits. In other words, collaborative learning activities involve students more deeply to solve challenging tasks together by discussing them in constructive ways to achieve the same goals. The diversity of the learners' knowledge, ability, learning styles, experiences, and skill are accommodated in collaborative activities and it becomes strength for students to accomplish tasks together. Students have to learn to make them used to working together to gain the same goal. In collaborative work, students unavoidably encounter differences and they have to deal with recognizing and working with it.

In individual task-based activity, students were asked to do tasks individually without help from other students. It has positive influence that it builds students confidence and students become more independent learners. In addition, the activity gives students chances to learn as their needs, ability, speed and their own learning style. In other words, students' individual differences such as individual development, learning style, aptitude and interest, and personality are accommodated in individual task-based activity. In the treatments, the benefits that can be seen during the individual task-based activity are students look more independent and they do not depend on other students, they show up all their ability, they are more responsible in completing their tasks, and the ability of individual student can be seen clearly from their performance in the classroom.

The finding of this study is in line with the theory introduced by Vygotsky (1978) so called the zone of proximal development. The theory focuses on the relation between instruction and development. He explained that the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky in Kozulin, 2003). In other words, there is a different improvement or result of students doing tasks or solving problems individually and students doing tasks or solving problems collaboratively with more competent peers in groups that is students doing tasks or solving problem collaboratively in groups show better improvement. In brief, collaborative learning help students learn more and deeper compared to individual learning.

## **CONCLUSION**

Finally, based on the discussion presented in the previous paragraphs, there are two major conclusions that can be drawn; the first, both collaborative activity and individual task-based activity were effective activities in improving students' reading achievement at grade IX of SMPN 13 Mataram. In other word, the two activities gave positive effect in improving students' reading achievement during the study. The second, the two activities were significantly different in improving students' reading achievement at grade IX of SMPN 13 Mataram; that is collaborative activity gave more significant effect in improving students' reading achievement shown by the significant differences on the improvement of students' post-test scores.

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