



# The Effect of Group Discussion on Understanding Connotative Meaning in Reading of Grade IV Elementary School Students

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## ABSTRACT

Understanding connotative meaning plays a central role in language literacy. This study aimed to investigate the effect of group discussion intervention on grade IV students' understanding of connotative meaning. This study was conducted at Karanggondang, Bantul Elementary School, in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The quasi-experimental pre-post test method was used in this study. The research sample consisted of fourth-grade students randomly selected to follow the group discussion intervention. The instrument used was a connotative meaning comprehension test composed of four indicators. The test data were analysed using the Wilcoxon signed ranks test to see the difference between pre-test and post-test and univariate analysis to analyse changes in mean scores. The results showed that the group discussion intervention significantly impacted students' understanding of connotative meaning ( $Z = 2.12, p < 0.05$ ). In addition, there was an increase in mean scores on all indicators of understanding connotative meaning after the intervention. Based on these results, we recommend implementing a group discussion intervention method in language learning to improve students' understanding of connotative meaning. In addition, further research can explore other factors that may affect the effectiveness of this method, as well as consider the use of technology as a supporting tool in improving students' understanding of connotative meaning.

**Keywords:** *connotative meaning, group discussion, literacy, intervention.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, literacy skills are a must to face the challenges of increasingly complex information. Literacy is not just a literal understanding of texts but also involves the ability to parse deeper meanings, including rich and complex connotations [1]. At the primary education level, especially grade IV, equipping students to understand connotative meanings in reading is very important. Connotations can bring emotional and contextual dimensions, thus increasing the absorption of information and allowing students to think more critically [2].

Understanding connotative meaning in reading is essential to literacy development [3]. Connotations carry emotional and contextual dimensions beyond denotative meanings [4]. It helps students understand texts' deeper layers of meaning [5]. Developing effective strategies to enhance students' connotative understanding is essential in education. Group discussion has been identified as an

effective learning method in various fields of education [6]. However, no in-depth research has examined the impact of group discussions on the understanding of connotative meanings in grade IV students.

Previous research in literacy has emphasized the importance of developing deep reading skills. According to Krissandi, connotative comprehension is an advanced stage of literacy comprehension that allows students to interpret texts holistically [7]. Research by Sari shows that students who understand connotations tend to be more knowledgeable, critical, and able to think out of the box [8].

Despite its importance, understanding connotative meaning in reading is difficult for students. Many factors influence connotative comprehension, such as cultural background, life experience and vocabulary. Therefore, practical learning approaches are needed to help students overcome this challenge. One approach that has attracted attention is group discussions [9].

Recent research emphasizes the importance of using learning strategies that encourage students' active participation in reading comprehension. One study found that the discussion method improved oral language skills for primary school students [10]. Group discussion has been recognized as a learning method that can stimulate students' active participation in the learning process. [11]. Research by Harianto showed that group discussions can encourage students to speak more, think critically, and build shared understanding [12]. Group discussions allow students to share views, broaden perspectives, and learn from each other's experiences and thoughts [13]. In addition, group discussions can facilitate the application of abstract concepts in natural contexts [14]. Although there are many studies on using group discussions in education, research regarding their effect on understanding connotative meanings is limited.

While group discussions can enhance connotative comprehension, there is limited in-depth research on their effect on grade IV students' connotative comprehension. No study has specifically explored how group discussion strategies can help grade IV students understand connotative meanings in reading passages. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the impact of using group discussions on grade IV students' connotative comprehension ability.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which group discussions can influence Grade IV students' understanding of connotative meaning. The research will examine whether group discussions can be a practical learning approach in improving connotative performance and how variations in the organization and conduct of group discussions can affect the outcome. This research has the potential to provide new insights into developing learning methods that focus on connotative understanding. This study is expected to guide educators in designing more effective learning strategies by filling a gap in the research literature. In addition, the results of this study can also provide a further understanding of the importance of group discussion in facilitating deep and contextualized connotative understanding. Thus, this study has a potential impact on improving the quality of literacy education at the basic education level.

## 2. METHOD

This study used a quasi-experimental approach. This approach was chosen because the research aims to observe the effect of using group discussion on understanding connotative meaning in the reading of fourth-grade students. This research was conducted at SD Negeri Karanggondang, Bantul, in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year.

The population of this study were all fourth-grade students at Karanggondang, Bantul elementary school, in

the even semester of the 2022/2023 school year. The sample in this study was all fourth-grade students 17 people. The sampling technique used was total sampling, in which all fourth-grade students would be part of the research sample. Selecting the entire grade IV is expected to cover a broader variation in the student's understanding of connotative meaning. The independent variable in this study is the use of group discussion as a learning method. The dependent variable is the comprehension of connotative meaning in students' reading.

The research instrument was a written test that measured understanding of connotative meaning. The test consisted of 20 questions with varying levels of difficulty. The test grids included students' ability to identify, interpret and explain connotative meanings, apply connotations in sentences, and relate connotations to the reading context. Data were collected through written tests before and after the intervention. The first test was conducted before the group discussion intervention as a pre-test, while the second was born after the intervention as a post-test.

Data analysis was conducted by comparing pre-test and post-test results to see if there was a significant difference in students' understanding of connotative meaning after the intervention. Univariate data was analysed descriptively using students' connotation understanding categories, while bivariate data was tested with Wilcoxon to compare pre-test and post-test scores. This comparison provides an overview of the extent to which the use of group discussion affects students' understanding of connotative meaning.

## 3. RESULT

Table 1 shows that only a small proportion of students, around 11.7%, could identify connotation meaning well before the intervention. However, there was a significant improvement after the group discussion intervention, where around 52.9% of students managed to identify connotative meanings better. The same thing happened to the ability to interpret and explain connotative meanings. Before the intervention, only about 17.6% of students could do this well. After the intervention, this percentage increased to about 47.1%. This result indicates a positive change in students' ability to interpret and explain connotative meanings after participating in group discussions. In terms of applying connotative meaning in sentences, only 5.9% of students could do this well before the intervention. After the intervention, there was a significant improvement, where around 58.8% of students managed to apply connotative meaning in sentences better. In terms of connecting connotation meaning with reading context, only about 5.9% of students could do this well before the intervention. After the intervention, this percentage increased to about 47.1%. This result shows an

improvement in students' ability to relate connotative meaning to the reading context after participating in group discussions. This analysis indicates that the group discussion intervention significantly positively affects the comprehension of the connotative meaning of grade

IV students. Although some categories still need to be improved, the positive changes show that this method effectively enhances students' understanding of connotations in reading.

**Table 1.** Student learning outcomes based on categories per indicator

Indicator	Good (n/%)				Enough (n/%)				Less (n/%)			
	pre		post		pre		post		pre		post	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Identify the connotative meaning	2	11,7	9	52,9	5	29,4	6	35,2	10	58,8	2	11,7
Interpret and explain the connotative meaning	3	17,6	8	47,1	3	17,6	7	41,1	11	64,7	2	11,7
Apply connotation meaning	1	5,9	10	58,8	7	41,2	6	35,3	9	52,9	1	5,9
Connecting connotative meaning in reading	1	5,9	8	47,1	3	17,6	8	47,1	13	76,4	1	5,9

Table 2 shows that in the indicator “Identifying connotation meaning”, there is an increase in the mean score from 45.8 (pre-test) to 63.9 (post-test). The statistical p-value of 0.034 indicates that this change is statistically significant. The indicator “Interpret and explain connotation meanings” also showed an increase in mean score from 55.3 (pre-test) to 63.8 (post-test). The statistical p-value was 0.041, indicating a significant change after the intervention. Meanwhile, in the indicator “Applying connotation meaning”, there was an increase in the mean value from 49.7 (pre-test) to 66.1 (post-test). The statistical p-value was 0.023, indicating a statistically significant change.

Finally, the indicator “Connecting connotation meaning in reading” showed an increase in mean value from 50.4 (pre-test) to 69.9 (post-test). The statistical p-value is 0.034, which indicates a significant change after the intervention.

Overall, the results of this analysis indicated that the group discussion intervention had a significant positive impact on students' comprehension of connotative meanings in reading passages. The change in mean scores from pre-test to post-test on all indicators showed an increase in students' understanding after the intervention.

**Table 2.** Results of analysis Wilcoxon test

Indicator	Statistic Value		Wilcoxon signed ranks			Mean	
	Z	p	Negative ranks	Positive ranks	Ties	Pre-test	Post-test
Identify the connotative meaning	3.22	0.034	1	16	-	45.8	63.9
Interpret and explain the connotative meaning	2.00	0.041	0	17	-	55.3	63.8
Apply connotation meaning	2.44	0.023	0	17	-	49.7	66.1
Connecting connotative meaning in reading	3.33	0.034	0	17	-	50.4	69.9

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed a positive impact of group discussion intervention on the understanding of the connotative meaning of fourth-grade students. The statistical analysis results showed a significant increase in all indicators of understanding connotative meaning after students participated in the intervention. This finding is consistent with previous research, which shows that group discussions can improve students' understanding of the meaning of the text. For example, Haryadi found that group discussion helped students understand the idea in the context of reading [15].

The results showing an increase in student understanding align with Bandura's social-cognitive theory, which states that interactions between individuals in groups can improve their understanding and skills [16]. In this context, group discussions provide opportunities for students to share views and interpretations, thus enriching their understanding of connotative meanings. Research by Fatonah also supports this idea by showing that discussions can result in more profound and multifaceted reading comprehension. [17].

Although the results of this study show a positive impact, some aspects still need attention. Although the understanding of connotative meaning improved, some students still showed limitations in connecting

connotative meaning with the context of the reading. This situation is in line with the findings by Makchuchit, who stated that students sometimes struggle to relate connotations to the broader message in the text. [18].

Furthermore, it is essential to note that this intervention is not a single solution to improve students' understanding of connotative meaning. Some students may require more diverse learning approaches according to their learning styles and individual characteristics. Research by Kellner et al. emphasizes the importance of variation in learning strategies to achieve optimal results in connotative understanding. [19].

In the context of education in today's digital era, it is important to utilize technology to support learning. Online applications or platforms can provide opportunities for students to discuss and share connotative understanding through virtual media. Research by Bedenlier et al. shows that technology can expand the space for discussion and student engagement in understanding the meaning of reading. [20].

Overall, this study shows that group discussion intervention can improve students' understanding of connotative meaning. However, there needs to be a holistic and diverse approach to learning to accommodate different types of learners. Teachers should have the ability to utilize the school environment as a learning resource. [21]. The findings have important implications for designing more effective learning strategies to strengthen students' understanding of connotative meaning in reading.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the group discussion intervention significantly improved grade IV students' understanding of connotative meaning. This result confirms that a collaborative approach can effectively enrich students' literacy comprehension.

The limitations of this study are the absence of a control group for direct comparison and the focus on one particular school and grade level, which may affect the generalizability of the results. For future research, it is recommended to involve a variety of schools and grade levels and a control group for further validation.

It is hoped that the application of the group discussion method can be expanded into the curriculum to strengthen students' language and literacy skills. Further research can explore technology as a learning tool to develop students' interaction and enrich connotative understanding in the digital era.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

APP (Author 1): Designed and implemented the study, collected and analyzed the data, and contributed to

the introduction, methods, and discussion sections of the article.

GA (Corresponding Author): Proposed the research idea, provided guidance and supervision in all phases of the study, led the data analysis, and was responsible for writing the discussion, conclusions, and implications, including revision of the article.

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