

The Use of Small Group Discussion on Students' Speaking Skill at MA Al-Hidayah Bangkalan

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Abstract:

This study explore the use of small group discussion on students' speaking skill. The issue identified by the researcher during this study is because of the lack of student participation in learning. As a result, the researchers conducted a study that involved both teachers and students in the learning process. The solution to address this problem was to employ group discussion strategies. Group discussions have proven to be highly effective for students in enhancing their speaking abilities, especially when speaking in public. This learning strategy heavily relies on student engagement, as in this approach, all aspects are decided and executed by the students. In conducting this research, the researchers utilized methods called observation and interview. This research was proven to be effective in improving students' speaking skill.

Keywords: Group Discussion, Speaking Skill

Introduction

Speaking involves interacting with others and sharing thoughts and information verbally (Sahara, 2021). Developing speaking skills can be challenging, with many facing difficulties in enhancing their English speaking abilities due to internal or external factors. Proficient speaking is vital because it determines how effectively individuals convey messages to others (Parupalli Srinivas Rao, 2019). Being skilled at speaking indicates language mastery. One of the primary aims of language learning is to improve communication, enabling individuals to express ideas clearly and accurately to others. Essentially, proficiency in speaking allows successful communication of thoughts and concepts.

Real-life observations, particularly among students, support these points. For instance, students often fear making mistakes when speaking English. Common issues include lack of fluency, low self-confidence, mispronunciation, limited vocabulary, grammar errors, and insufficient

practice (Nur & Riadil, 2019). An example is the situation in class 12 IPS at MA Al-Hidayah Bangkalan, where inadequate English speaking skills hinder education due to the use of Indonesian for teaching. Students lack of vocabulary, proper pronunciation, grammar proficiency, fluency, and practice. Addressing this require strategy is just like engaging in small discussions in English or discussing English-related topics. Such methods can enhance fluency and correct grammar errors through mutual observation during conversations. Integrating them in lectures can enhances focus, offers public speaking practice, boosts confidence, and improves fluency (Karam, 2021). This study conducted at MA Al-Hidayah Bangkalan addresses the use of Small Group Discussion.

Review of Literature

Small Group Discussion

1. Definition of Small Group Discussion

A small group discussion is a face-to-face interaction between two or more people with a specific goal to exchange information, argue opinions, or solve problems (Hutagalung & Sitorus, 2020). In case, the definition of Small Group Discussion are having so much version, one of them is stated by Brewer that small group discussions allow the presenter to announce a topic or idea for group discussion among attendees. A small group discussion adheres to democratic principles and facilitates the generation of diverse ideas for collective consideration and reflection. It allows for the exchange of thoughts within a group setting, guided by the presenter (Mentari Kurnia Utami, 2018).

2. Types of Small Group Discussion

To maximize the effectiveness of small-group collaboration, students should recognize their dual responsibilities as both subject matter experts and group leaders. They should carefully plan the group work, considering both the content that needs to be addressed and the strategies to be employed. This thoughtful planning is crucial for achieving the desired group learning objectives. According to (Mentari Kurnia Utami, 2018) classifies three variants

of small group discussion, namely cooperative learning groups, problem solving groups, and investigative groups :

a. Cooperative Learning Group

This group fosters collaboration among its members to achieve a shared objective. The primary aim of this group is to facilitate face-to-face interactions, empower individuals within the group, and cultivate interpersonal and small-group skills.

b. Problem Solving Group

The purpose of this group is to encourage learners to engage in cooperative exploration, inquiry, and critical thinking during group discussions. It is designed to address real-life problems in a strategic manner.

c. Group Investigation

The presenter organizes participants into small groups based on their specific areas of interest. Each group focuses on a particular category and gathers information to analyze its significance. The goal is to foster group skills and promote interactions among peers.

d. Panel Discussion

Panel discussions involve a select few individuals deliberating on a specific topic. A moderator may be assigned to manage the conversation by ensuring that lengthy contributions are kept in check and encouraging quieter members to participate. Panel discussions are often structured around topic outlines or questions, with participants presenting their comments in a manner akin to impromptu speeches.

3. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Small Group Discussion

Recognizing the significance of interaction in the language classroom, it is crucial to incorporate collaborative and self-directed group work where two or more learners are assigned a task together (Wiyudo Serena, 2016), This topic has formed some advantages of group discussion in English class :

a. Produce an interactive language

By moving away from the teacher-centered approach commonly found in traditional language lessons, where students have limited opportunities to speak during class discussions, teamwork offers a

solution by providing ample speaking opportunities for a larger number of students.

b. Increase students' responsibility

Participating in a small group setting brings even more advantages, particularly for learners who may feel too passive in a regular classroom environment. It fosters a sense of responsibility among each student to actively contribute or, at the very least, actively engage in the group discussion. This creates a situation where every student is equally involved and valued within the discussion process.

c. Organize the individual

Within the group discussion, each member possesses varying levels of skills and abilities. For instance, one student may excel in listening skills compared to others. In such cases, it becomes that student's responsibility to listen attentively and actively participate in the discussion, benefiting the entire group. Consequently, each group has its own unique style of discussion, influenced by the diverse skill sets and perspectives of its members.

d. Make wisser decision

Promote student autonomy by letting them make their own decisions in groups without teachers telling them what to do.

Recognizing the significance of interaction in language classrooms, it is crucial to incorporate collaborative and self-driven group work where two or more learners are assigned tasks together. This approach highlights several advantages of engaging in group discussions within an English class setting. (Mentari Kurnia Utami, 2018) :

a. Group work produces interactive language

Avoiding the teacher's habit of talking too much during lessons, where each student may only get a few opportunities to speak during class discussions, group work helps solve problems by offering many opportunities for students to speak as well.

b. Group work offers an embracing effective climate

In group work students can accept criticism and rejection, which motivates students to be more cooperative and more vocal in groups, most students are motivated to convey their statements in groups.

c. Group work increases learner's responsibility and autonomy

Being a participant in a group, even in a small group, provides benefits for some students who are too relaxed in "just watching and listening" in the discussion process.

d. Group work is a step towards individual instruction

In discussions, each group member has a different level of skills and abilities. For example, if a student has higher listening skills than others, then the student have the responsibility to listen to engage in discussions that benefit the group so that each group have a different discussion style.

Harmer added several advantages of group discussions. First, drastically increased the number of individual talks for students - group work provides opportunities for students to express diverse opinions and contribute in varied ways. Second, Promote broader cooperation and negotiation skills - by allowing students to make their own decisions within their groups, autonomy is promoted, empowering students to take ownership of their learning process rather than relying solely on teacher direction. Third, Avoid teacher dominance - while it is important for the teacher to avoid passivity among individuals in the group, group discussions offer flexibility for students to choose their level of participation. This flexibility creates a more conducive classroom environment.

Harmer also mentions some disadvantages of this technique. First, some teachers feel that any control and feel of an entire class that has been painstakingly. Second, constructed can be lost when the class is broken down into smaller entities some students do not like it because they are more focused on paying attention to the teacher than working with their peers. Third, Individuals can fall into group roles they do not like, so some are passive while others dominate. Fourth, small group discussions can take longer to organize the preparations.

In conclusion, although there are some drawbacks of small group discussions, discussing issues to reach an understanding and consensus after much deliberation of other people's points of view and ideas, can trigger new thinking and exploration of concepts, encourage analysis of factual information, and develop open-mindedness new attitudes and beliefs. Small group discussions serve multiple purposes, encompassing intellectual, emotional, and social objectives. Consequently, employing the technique of small group discussions is highly suitable as it facilitates critical thinking, encourages exploration of various perspectives, and enables students to differentiate between factual information and subjective opinions.

4. The Implementation of Teaching Using Small Group Discussion

There are a number of steps that need to be taken to make this method easier when discussing in small groups. According (Selvia Rosadi, Cicih Nuraeni, and Agus Priadi, 2019), there are several steps to implement small group discussions :

a. Introduction

Subsequently, either the teacher provides instructions to the students or divides them into multiple groups, assigning specific objectives for the discussion.

b. Directing the discussion

Teacher become the supervisor in the discussion to encourage participants to raise any questions related to the topic, while the moderator strives to maintain control over the discussion.

c. Summarizing the discussion

After the discussion teacher and students make a conclusion about the material presented, in the last teacher ask the students to give some suggestions about the learning strategy for the next meeting.

According to (Antoni, 2014) explains that discussion techniques for use in small group discussion are outlined as follows (Bohari, 2020). First, the students in the class are divided into small groups, consisting of three to six students each. Each group is assigned a distinct topic of discussion that requires them to delve into key points and provide elaboration. Second, sufficient time at least 10 minutes, is allocated for the groups to engage in

discussions regarding their assigned topic. Once the group members have completed their discussion, they are required to share a portion of the outcomes with each group member. Additionally, they are given the opportunity to present the results of their group discussion in front of the entire class. Third, following the presentation which typically lasts between six to ten minutes, fellow classmates are encouraged to pose questions concerning the viewpoints expressed. The group members accompanying the presenter can assist in answering the questions raised by other groups.

Method

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Sugiyono (2015:40) as cited by Laras Apryla MH (2021), descriptive qualitative design is crucial as a preliminary step for establishing causal relationships between actions and outcomes. However, this approach is limited to hypothesizing and explaining issues. The primary aim of descriptive qualitative methodology is to recognize and provide corroborative evidence of the existence of specific components/variables. Consequently, the researchers adopted a qualitative descriptive framework to ascertain the utilization of small group discussions for enhancing the speaking skills of 12th-grade students at MA Al-Hidayah Bangkalan. The English learning environment at MA Al-Hidayah lacks appeal due to the frequent employment of teacher-centered strategies. According to the researchers, these strategies induce boredom among students. To address this, the study delves into the impact of utilizing small group discussions on the speaking skills of 12th-grade students at MA Al-Hidayah.

Results and Discussions

The findings of the study reveal that by utilizing the group discussion approach, teachers can effectively engage students in critical thinking, encourage expression of opinions, and foster the courage to engage in debates. This method prevents students from becoming passive participants in classroom learning. Implementing the group discussion method supports the development of students' critical thinking abilities. However, teachers

must meticulously prepare to ensure the successful application of this technique.

During presentations, groups that lag behind are required to pose questions to the presenting groups. The question session comprises two parts, each featuring two questions. Incentives are given to actively participating students, and students are encouraged to ask questions about unclear concepts. After undergoing multiple discussion stages, students, guided by the teacher, collectively arrive at conclusions about the studied material. As indicated by Ernest and cited in (Kusumawaningtias, 2019), small group discussions involve several steps:

- a. **Preparation:** The teacher introduces and explains upcoming material, assuming some baseline knowledge from students. This stage lays the groundwork for discussions. The teacher may provide instructions or form groups with specific objectives.
- b. **Managing the discussion:** The moderator oversees the discussion's progression. Students record their discussions, presenting outcomes to their own and other groups. Group members contribute through clarifications, opinions, comments, and critiques. Facilitators encourage questions. The moderator maintains control.
- c. **Summarizing the discussion:** Summarizing concludes the discourse. The moderator, having listened or participated, generates a final summary. This encapsulates key points and conclusions from the discussion. In the realm of education, various effective learning strategies exist, yet no strategy is flawless. This applies to Small Group Discussion, which the researcher analyzed for advantages and disadvantages based on questionnaires.

Advantages of Small Group Discussion Strategy:

1. Students exhibit responsibility in decision-making.
2. Critical thinking is nurtured in significant decision-making.
3. Respect for diverse opinions and collaboration is promoted.
4. Enhanced communication skills.
5. Knowledge development through opinion exchange within and between groups.

6. Reduced teacher dominance in teaching.
7. Creation of a relaxed learning atmosphere.

Disadvantages of Small Group Discussion Strategy:

1. Requires substantial preparation time.
2. Disagreements might strain relationships.
3. Classroom conditions could become less conducive.
4. Some students may struggle to focus due to an excess of study sources.

Conclusion

The latter approach prompted greater participation as students found the support of their peers encouraging. Additionally, small group discussions widened students' perspectives by fostering idea exchange. These discussions prompted accountability and creativity in students' decision-making, enabling them to collaboratively develop innovative solutions.

It's important to note that all learning strategies possess both strengths and weaknesses. The effectiveness of a learning strategy relies on the teacher's proper and accurate implementation. Thus, the teacher's competence must align with the chosen learning strategy to achieve positive outcomes. Inadequate alignment between the teacher's proficiency and the learning strategy may lead to suboptimal results, regardless of the strategy chosen.

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