



The Perspectives of English Teachers in Improving Students' Speaking Skills Through Group Discussions

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Abstract

Speaking ability is one of the important skills in learning a language. Speaking ability also requires students to be able to produce utterances in the form of speech in the target language. English teachers need to be able to provide fun learning in order to improve students' speaking skills in English. Therefore, this study aims to find out the perspective of English teachers when teaching English through group discussion methods in order to improve the speaking ability of EFL students. The method used in this research is qualitative through a descriptive approach. Data were obtained through field observations when the teacher gave teaching using the group discussion method, then interviews were conducted with two English teachers. Data is analyzed through data reduction, data display, conclusion. The results of the study show that in improving students' speaking skills, the teacher should be able to use learning themes that are appropriate or familiar with everyday habits. In addition, through the group discussion method students can become more confident, brave and can improve their ability to collaborate in solving learning problems.

Keywords: speaking skill, group discussion, improvements

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English speaking skill is an important ability for everyone to have and master, considering that globalization is so wide open that it requires everyone to be able to connect with one another globally. (Prayudha, 2023). You can see that in almost all aspects of life there are words or sentences using English, both in advertisements, in technology used every day, on social media to announcements or banners or billboards on the roadside which sometimes use English words. Seeing this situation means understanding and mastering English cannot be separated in everyday life. To understand the meaning and meaning of the English language, it is very necessary to have an understanding of the use of English so that it is not misinterpreted or does not feel confused in interpreting a word or sentence in English. It is necessary to understand that the ability to speak English is one of the skills that really supports the creation of wider connection access (Prayudha, 2023). Having good English skills will certainly provide broad opportunities for users of this language to establish relationships or wider networks so that opportunities to gain relationships, information and knowledge can be done easily. When someone is able to use English then he is able to make wider and better interactions. Therefore, it is necessary for each individual to encourage himself to always be motivated to hone his communication skills by using good and correct English.

However, the implementation that occurs in schools actually explains the opposite. There are still many students who have not been able to use English optimally. There are still many students who are reluctant or embarrassed when asked to speak English, even though when someone learns a new language, he must get used to practicing speaking and using that language so that fluency in using the foreign language can continue to be developed in

everyday life. In addition, there are still students who feel that the mastery or ability of the English language they have is very minimal so that sometimes it makes these students feel tired to practice and learn English. Williams & Svensson (2020) said that the problems and obstacles faced by students while learning were challenges by the teacher that had to be overcome immediately. This kind of thing is indeed often experienced by various students in any circles, especially students who do not come from native language-speaking countries. There are still many students who feel that English is not very important to learn so that there are some students who do not seriously improve their language skills, even though in an era that is not limited like this, it allows anyone to be able to make broad connections which can be done using language. English as the international connecting language. This kind of thing will be a challenge for many people in creating a generation that is able to speak and master English. Therefore, there needs to be a more intensive effort that can be made by English teachers to support students in increasing motivation and interest in learning so they can use or master the use of English. Nadia & Hilalina (2020) mentioned that there are still many students who have anxiety when learning English and this must be immediately addressed by the teacher using various appropriate methods.

An English teacher is the main key in a foreign language class. The teacher has a key role in bringing and designing interesting learning so that students become more interested and more motivated to continue learning to improve their English language skills. Teachers need to find ways that are appropriate to the circumstances and conditions of students so that when learning is carried out, students become more interested and interested in participating in the learning process and participating in all the activities provided by the teacher in increasing their capacity to understand English. Teachers need to observe and observe what the class conditions they teach are like (Prayudha, 2022). Teachers must be able to understand the characteristics of students so that when a lesson plan is made the teacher can determine the main points in carrying out a good learning process. It is very necessary for an English teacher to know the level and ability of their students' English so that the teacher can design and use appropriate materials, media and strategies in teaching them. The activities provided must also be able to encourage students to be actively involved in carrying them out, not only that the activities should also be able to encourage students to improve various language skills such as speaking skills. This speaking ability is very important for students because when they are able to produce an utterance, convey ideas and opinions in English then they can be categorized as students who are able to use English in the right way. To assist students in improving their English speaking ability, it is necessary for the teacher to be able to determine the boundaries of the implementation of learning appropriately, for example by using the right method to improve their language skills.

One way that English teachers can use in improving students' speaking skills is by using the group discussion method. Group discussion is a method that can attract students to be able to share opinions, ideas, and creativity in conveying a speech using English. Prayudha & Solihah (2023) said that through this activity students will also be equipped with the ability to think critically and creatively in making plans, solving problems and finding solutions to what they face when learning using the discussion method. This method will also make students much more able to appreciate each different opinion and can also support the creation of a fair learning atmosphere where each group member will be given the same opportunity to give opinions using English so that the teacher will provide a sense of justice for students in give opinions or ideas through the use of English. Learning that is fun and in accordance with the learning conditions of students will help students to increase learning motivation (Mansur & Fadhilawati, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to build an interesting and fun learning atmosphere so that students are encouraged to actively participate in

learning. Furthermore, looking at the situation of learning English at school which tends not to be able to maximize students' ability to improve their speaking, intensive steps are needed for English teachers to be able to assist students in improving their speaking skills through the use of the group discussion method. Where the teacher will provide material, topics or themes that students must discuss and find solutions to every motion or problem encountered when learning to use English. Therefore, this study examines teachers' perceptions when using the group discussion method in order to improve students' speaking skills in English.

METHOD

The current study uses qualitative research. Qualitative research is a type of research that can be studied based on opinions, perspectives, opinions or conditions that actually occur in the research being conducted. According to Prayudha (2023) Qualitative research is usually used by researchers to examine information in the form of real conditions from the field, either in the form of opinions, perspectives or how the condition of the research object is going. In carrying out this research, researchers used a descriptive approach. Descriptive approach is one way that can be used to describe the circumstances that occur in the object of research in detail, without contrivance and as it is. According to Sugiyono (2014) Descriptive approach is one way to explain and describe the atmosphere or data from research results by explaining in detail, in detail and without engineering. So it can be concluded that this study aims to reveal the teacher's perception of the use of group discussion methods in improving students' English speaking skills.

This research was carried out for one month by implementing English learning through group discussion methods in order to improve students' speaking skills. The learning process has been observed to get an overview of the process of teaching and learning activities. In addition, the participants in this study were two English teachers who were asked to conduct interviews related to the group discussion method that had been implemented in English learning activities in class. The interviews were carried out in a semi-structured manner related to learning English using the group discussion method. During teaching and learning activities carried out by researchers using documentation to obtain data from observations. After all the data has been collected, the data is analyzed through three stages proposed by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2013), they are; data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning by using the group discussion method is one way that English teachers can use to improve their speaking skills in English. In this study, learning using the group discussion method was carried out for one month by asking students to carry out learning based on small discussion groups. The group discussion method can be done by dividing students into several small groups to find and solve the problem being discussed (Rosadi et al., 2020). Learning is carried out by dividing students into small groups consisting of four or five students who will later be asked to provide statements, ideas, opinions or solutions to the topics discussed in learning activities. At this stage the teacher will give students a theme that must be discussed or discussed and then the teacher gives time for students to talk about ten minutes. The teacher needs to design the right time management so that learning can be carried out at the right time (Hsieh et al., 2021). When the discussion process takes place the teacher observes and witnesses how students formulate the course of the discussion activity. Here, researchers also make in-depth observations related to the activities carried out by teachers and students. From the results of observations that have been made, it is found that learning using the group discussion method becomes more lively and makes the learning

atmosphere more positive. It can be seen that students are grouped based on randomly not choosing friends but based on mentioning numbers. In practice students tend to follow all the activities given by the teacher. The teacher only gives a brief explanation of the material and topics that will be studied by students, then the teacher gives certain movements related to the use of everyday English. Bungum et al (2018) states that the material provided must be in accordance with conditions or daily life so that students are able to develop ideas and abilities in critical thinking in improving speaking skills. The students will be asked to find ideas in order to complete the tasks given by the teacher. For example, students learn about procedural text and then the teacher asks students to discuss daily activities related to procedural text, for example cooking fried rice, making cakes, watering plants and so on. Each group member will explain their ideas related to the activities they carry out according to the flow of the procedure text. In this practice students are asked to explain in detail the steps related to what they are doing. This activity will train students to dare to think creatively, think critically, be able to be more confident in speaking in front of the class, be confident and be able to cooperate in solving problems given by their teacher. In this way students will get used to being more able to express statements in using English. One good way to improve an ability is consistency in carrying out learning. Teachers need to train students' abilities by using the group discussion method so they get used to talking to lots of people (Bohari, 2020). Activities that are carried out continuously will train the memory and abilities of students so that through this group discussion students will get used to giving suggestions, statements and so on in order to improve their ability to speak English.

Giving activities in the form of discussions is expected so that students can exchange information, knowledge and arguments using English. Some students looked very enthusiastic in participating in learning through the group discussion method. Students can be seen exchanging ideas or looking for information related to what is discussed in the group. In addition, almost all activities are carried out in the same way, namely students are asked to be able to express what they get and know through giving explanations in English. With the implementation of this learning, some students tend to have the same opportunity to appear in expressing their opinions. Then, the courage and self-confidence of students is encouraged by the teacher through question and answer sessions and presentations in English. There is a positive impact that occurs when students are able to participate actively in small group discussion activities (Tan et al., 2020). Each student has the same proportion in conveying ideas and opinions using English. This is very necessary so that it is not just one person in the group who explains and presents the results of the group's work using English. Even though there are many students who are still hesitant or shy when using English in conveying a sentence in English, the courage in making a statement must be appreciated by the teacher and other students. Seeing the possibility of this method to improve students' speaking skills, teachers can occasionally provide trigger questions outside of the themes or topics discussed in order to provoke students' critical thinking skills to be better. In addition, it is very necessary for the teacher to be able to know what boundaries should not be discussed so that students also have the ability to limit themselves to things that they do not need to express. Through group discussion students are encouraged to be able to understand the things around them (Suryadi, 2020). The teacher must also pay attention to the level of student ability which still provides good motivation when students explain a material haltingly. The most common form of appreciation the teacher gives is in the form of appreciation in the form of "good job, great answer, amazing". These words will give encouragement to students regarding the efforts they have made while in English class, so that it will give them a sense of courage, good confidence in improving speaking skills. The implementation of the learning can be seen in the following figure:



Figure 1. Student is explaining something in front of class.

Seen in the picture above the learning atmosphere is more conducive, many students are paying attention to what is being explained by one of the students in front of the class. This gives encouragement to other students to be able to focus more on what their colleagues convey in front of the class so that they are able to practice respecting and respecting every opinion conveyed by others. In addition, in this learning situation students will exchange ideas, opinions and their innovations in providing solutions related to the problems faced by their groups so that this will teach the values of good cooperation between groups and foster an attitude of mutual support between one another. other. It is necessary at this time that students are equipped with good collaboration skills so that they can be better able to deal with any problems that exist around them (Jung et al., 2019). Thus the teacher only needs to direct and provide clear instructions to students to be able to further improve understanding of English, especially in students' speaking skills to be better. Then, continuous planning is also important to provide continuous learning activities to students, not only being able to provide explanations while studying but students are also encouraged to get used to using English in daily communication by providing exercises, group assignments and so on in order to continue to train students' speaking skills outside of school hours. This is very necessary so that students do not stop doing and training themselves only in the school environment but also need to train themselves in situations outside of school hours.

Furthermore, to find out more comprehensive teacher perceptions regarding the use of the discussion group method, the researcher conducted interviews with two English teachers using semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted freely related to the teacher's perception of the use of group work methods in order to improve students' speaking skills in English. The results of the interview are as follows:

What is the learning atmosphere when using the group discussion method?

"Learning English through the group discussion method is a good way to help and encourage students to improve their English skills, especially speaking skills. This method provides equal opportunities for all students to be able to have the opportunity to speak English. According to teacher A, the group discussion method is able to generate an atmosphere of good cooperation or collaboration among students. Students are able to discuss what was learned at that time and students can follow the learning well and be actively involved in

all the activities provided. In addition, students can convey statements and utterances based on what is discussed better and more confidently. Similar to teacher A, teacher B explained that by using the group discussion method students were more able to appreciate the time to discuss the material they were studying. Students become more appreciative of opinions, respect the other person and can find solutions and innovations to the learning problems they face while studying. Thus, learning activities by utilizing the group discussion method can form a learning atmosphere that is more supportive for students to be able to improve their English language skills because it is able to give all students time to express opinions and opinions related to the material being discussed”.

Can group discussions help students improve their English speaking skills?

“Based on the results of the learning that has been done, learning English using the group discussion method is able to provide equal and fair opportunities for each student to be able to provide statements, opinions and answers using English based on the theme or material being discussed. Students will be trained in practicing their English speaking skills because they will jointly seek and formulate answers from what is discussed in their groups. According to teacher A, students' English speaking ability can be further improved when learning is carried out using the group discussion method. Students will have their turn to speak and express opinions on the problems and topics they are studying, therefore inevitably students will practice speaking before appearing in front of the class. Furthermore, teacher B also explained that students were able to perform better when learning through the group discussion method. This was shown by how brave and how many students were able to convey messages in front of the class, then were able to compose question sentences and conduct debriefing both with group partners and with other friends. This will be a good indicator in learning English, especially for practicing students' English speaking skills. Therefore, English teachers must be able to find appropriate English teaching solutions to help students improve various abilities in English including speaking skills which are important when learning a language.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the group discussion method in English classes?

“Just like using other methods and strategies, the group discussion method also has its own advantages and disadvantages. In the implementation of learning English the group discussion method also has advantages including being able to foster a spirit of cooperation in finding solutions to the problems they face during learning, training students to be able to respect and respect every difference in a statement using English and which certainly can train courage and students' confidence in giving arguments using English, as well as developing collaborative values in providing input, encouragement and statements as seen from their critical thinking abilities. This was also stated by both teacher A and teacher B who each agreed with this statement where utilizing the group discussion method would train students to be able to provide equal opportunities in expressing and expressing an opinion using English in front of the class. However, there are also various deficiencies encountered

when carrying out learning through the group discussion method, including the implementation time which is too long where students need extra time to ponder answers using English. However, even though it took quite a long time from the discussion activities the students were able to appear more confident, braver and able to properly convey statements using English.

How good are students' speaking skills when using the group discussion method?

"Teacher A said that judging from the ability to speak English students were more confident, braver and more able to express statements in English in front of the class when using the group discussion method. This is because students practice together in constructing sentences using English so that comprehension in composing language structures becomes better and clearer. This was also stated by teacher B where he said that students became more confident in conveying an argument compared to not using the group discussion method. When students are able to be confident in conveying a message, the message given will be a sentence that is straightforward and has meaning even though there are some students who are wrong in compiling sentence structures, the meaning conveyed can be easily understood. Thus, the use of the group discussion method provides an opportunity for students to be better able to improve their speaking skills in front of the class".

Are students more confident, brave and able to be more creative in speaking English?

"As has been explained that using the group discussion method will provide an opportunity for all students to convey messages and ideas using English. Students will be trained in expressing opinions and encouraged to be involved in a conversation in the discussion forum. This will provide an opportunity for all students to appear more courageous and confident in using English. Students will become more creative in thinking and constructing sentences in English when in a challenging situation so the teacher needs to provide better guidance and encouragement so that students do not feel insecure and embarrassed when they are in front of the class. This was also conveyed by teacher A where when students are in front of the class, the teacher needs to provide encouragement and guidance when students feel confused or awkward in conveying messages so that students will feel they are cared for and acknowledged and appreciated the way he conveys an opinion in front of the class. Thus, teacher B also stated that it is important to foster enthusiasm in students when speaking in front of the class. Give input not to be afraid to speak that is not in accordance with the sentence structure so that students can be more confident in conveying something well.

From the presentation of the interview results above, it illustrates that the group discussion method is able to arouse and provide good encouragement to students to improve their public speaking skills. This has a positive impact on teaching English so that teachers can help students to be more courageous and confident in speaking in front of the class. More than that, when students are confident, courageous and think critically, they will become individuals who are ready to compete globally, have broad international connections and tend to be able to build relationships internationally. This will have a positive impact on the development of

the characteristics of Indonesian people who are ready to face the challenges of an increasingly advanced era.

CONCLUSION

Speaking ability is one of the important abilities when someone learns a new language and it needs to be continuously improved so that students are able to master and produce clear and good speech. In this lesson an English teacher should encourage students to improve their language skills, especially speaking skills so that when faced with different situations students are able to speak and use English properly and correctly. To support the mastery of good speaking skills, the teacher needs to use various methods that are appropriate to the abilities and learning conditions of students so that the learning objectives can be achieved. Teachers can use various methods, media or even strategies in learning activities so that students are able to gain good mastery of the language. Here, the teacher can take advantage of group discussions to encourage students to improve their speaking skills. This method will train students to be more courageous in expressing opinions, expressing an idea and providing arguments using English. Through the application of comprehensive learning methods it can foster self-confidence, respect and can encourage students to have collaborative skills in solving learning problems experienced by their group. Thus, teachers need and must accustom students to be more actively involved in carrying out speaking activities in English so that they can become individuals who are able to use and master English.

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