

The Small Group Discussion to Improve English Communication Skills

Joko Prayudha S*, Nabila Maratus Solihah

Universitas Bengkulu.

Corresponding author*

jokoprayudha@gmail.com

Abstract: Communication is the most important aspect of creating mutually understandable two-way interactions. Communication shows the intent and meaning of a word or sentence. In English, communication skills are very important to support interglobal interactions. At present, almost all aspects of life cannot be avoided by the use of English, be it on social media, in advertisements, or even in products that we often use every day, there must be words or sentences in English, so intensive English teaching is needed in order to create individuals who understand and use English so that misunderstandings about the meaning in English can be avoided. Therefore, this study aims to explain the use of small group discussions to improve communication skills in English. The type of research used is qualitative by using a literature study approach. Data was collected by referring to journals, scientific articles, and books in order to collect material related to small group discussions in improving English communication. Furthermore, the data that has been collected is explained descriptively regarding its use in improving communication in English. The results of the study show that the use of small group discussion has a positive impact on encouraging students to practice communication skills in English besides that, it can also increase self-confidence and communication skills in English.

Keywords: small group discussion, English, communication skill.

Introduction

As an international language of instruction, English has an important role in connecting communication globally. English has also become a language that cannot be separated in everyday life where in almost every aspect of life you can find words or sentences of English origin and this makes English a language that is often encountered in our lives. Even though sometimes we accidentally read something, there are words or sentences that appear in English, but in reality, there are still many students in Indonesia who have not been able to maximize their knowledge by mastering their understanding of English, even though English is very important (Prayudha, 2022). Therefore, understanding and mastery English skills must be improved and taught intensively in order to provide good knowledge to students. The teaching that is carried out should be able to invite students to be actively involved in

carrying out orders and responsibilities and participating in learning in the classroom. Teachers have a very large role in guiding success for students, so it is important for teachers to be able to find the most appropriate solution to overcoming the problems faced by students. Here, English teacher must be able to explore the potential of students so that they are interested and motivated to continue to improve communication in English. However, seeing from the conditions that occur in various schools, there are many students who feel they are not optimal in understanding and using English. Many think that English is difficult, are lazy to use it, or some even feel embarrassed when speaking English.

Based on these problems, it is very necessary for the teacher's role in solving problems to help and find solutions in improving students' communication skills in English. Teachers have a very important role in providing support and developing students' ability to understand and use

English. A good teacher certainly has the ability to help students' problems and difficulties in understanding English. Teachers who have good educational competence have various ways of dealing with problems like this, so teacher creativity and innovation are needed to overcome this protracted problem. The teacher is the main key in determining the success of students, so it is very necessary for teachers to analyze or observe the conditions and conditions of students in designing and providing appropriate learning to students (Prayudha & Pradana, 2023). With good planning and creativity, as well as supportive media, it will directly or indirectly influence how students learn so that it can encourage them to improve their communication skills in English. Good planning for overcoming problems like this can be done by the teacher by providing strategies or teaching methods that are adjusted based on the circumstances and conditions of the students so that during the implementation of learning, students can actively participate in their activities.

There are many ways that teachers can apply to overcome the problem of students not being able to communicate optimally in English; one of them is offered in this study is by using the small group discussion method. The small group discussion method is a way of teaching by involving students in small groups consisting of three to five people who carry out question and answer activities or discussions about things they often do in their daily activities, for example, discussing hobbies, family, idols, directions, and so on. Activities in small group discussions are structured based on the needs of students so that when they practice communication or speak in English they don't have too many difficulties in conveying it. This activity encourages students to practice speaking English through experiences and events that they often have to do. Teachers' emotions especially positive emotions in SGD has a huge impact student satisfaction and collaboration. Cheng et al. (2022) add that the atmosphere in positive emotional can give higher level of productivity in group discussions. In addition, the activity of exchanging ideas and opinions regarding daily activities, hobbies or habits will provoke students' thoughts about what they will say and convey in English.

Small group discussion activities will also emphasize opportunities for each student to convey answers to what is the main focus of discussion in groups so that they can provide equal challenges and opportunities in communicating using English.

Then, small group discussions can also be a forum for students to exchange experiences, ideas and information related to topics discussed in English, so that in this way it will encourage students to get used to speaking in English. Because the group consists of small groups, the discussions they are having will seem more intense so that their mastery of English will be more thorough, be it speaking, listening and so on. Bohari (2020) adds that SGD is effective to teach speaking skills. Thus, the teacher when facing a problem in learning English can apply an interesting learning strategy that provides equal and equal opportunities for students to communicate or improve their speaking skills. So, this study explains how to use small group discussions to improve students' English communication skills.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design using a literature study approach. According to Nassaji (2015), qualitative research is a research method that can be carried out by collecting data from various sources to understand perspectives, intentions, and information related to what is being studied. Qualitative research was used to find out how the small group discussion strategy can have an impact on learning English for students, so that this will illustrate its use in learning that encourages students to practice English communication. Thus, qualitative research is used in order to obtain more detailed information without interference or manipulation of data regarding the object being studied through predetermined steps. Meanwhile, the literature study approach is a way or a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading, recording, and managing the research material studied (Zed, 2004). Furthermore, data

was obtained through the collection of various kinds of material from journals, articles, and books related to small group discussions. Data collection was carried out intensively to see how well the presentation was delivered by research sources. After the data has been collected, the data will be analyzed in three stages (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2013), they are data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

Result and Discussion

Small group discussion is a method that can be applied in English communication classes. Small group discussions consist of 3-4 students who are combined to start conversations or discussions related to the material being discussed. Materials or themes that can be used can be materials related to daily life, habits or personal experiences. Through discussions related to self-material it will make it easier for students to explain and understand usage in English. The utilization of small group discussion can be described as follows:

a. Small Group

Small group is a small learning group consisting of 3-4 or more students whose aim is to learn or solve the problems discussed. This small group is implemented to train cooperation or collaborative understanding between students related to the material being discussed. In small groups they will work together to find, overcome or share ideas and creativity in solving problems. Rosadi et al. (2020) argue that small group discussion strategy give a chance to students to prove their confidence in speaking; engage students in work group discussion communicatively; the students have the opportunities to improve their speaking skills. By using the small group method, students will try to share their ideas and thoughts with fellow group mates intensely because the number of groups is not too large so they can save time and all members get the same opportunity to share or tell stories or discuss using English. Prayudha (2021) states that small groups are a way that teachers can apply in class so that students can determine solutions to problems faced by their groups. So it

can be concluded that small groups can provide opportunities for students to share ideas by practicing speaking or communicating skills in solving a problem.

b. Small Group Discussion (SGD)

The small group discussion learning method is a series of learning activities carried out by some students consisting of small groups (3-5 students) through discussions in conveying material in the form of information, experiences, stories to habits related to the material discussed in order to achieve the learning objectives set. discussed. Based on Slavin (2011) the SGD method is carried out by dividing students into small groups consisting of 3-5 people who discuss a material topic. SGD is a method that groups students into small groups in discussion activities, this is in accordance with one of the competencies taught in 21st century learning, namely Collaboration (Resti & Anwar, 2019). Thus, learning English by utilizing the SGD method can train students to use English through discussions, exchanging ideas, thoughts, experiences or stories related to themselves so that students understand the content conveyed easily. Jung et al., (2019) implied that in small group discussions (SGD) there are some principles namely collaborative argumentation, open discussion, equal participation and reciprocal respect. In collaborative argumentation student evaluate various views within a topic in a reasonable argument. In open discussion, students having freedom to share ideas without pressure. SGD fosters students to regulate their communication in a good manner in encouraging agreement or disagreement opinions.

c. Stages in conducting a small group discussion

1. Understand scenarios. This means that the teacher explains the purpose of the discussion carried out with regard to what, the goals and expectations to be achieved. Students are asked to understand what is discussed so that they can find out what will be used as the language of discussion during learning. Example: the teacher gives learning instructions using SGD and the goals to be achieved.

2. Problem statement. The teacher explains what theme or topic will be discussed in the discussion using English (Wijaya et al., 2021). Example: the teacher asks students to be able to discuss descriptive text.
3. Provide brainstorming. Provide an overview of the topic of material and the procedure for carrying out discussion activities. Encouraging students' apperception about what will be discussed in the discussion that will be carried out so that it can provide a stimulus to develop students' ideas and creativity.
4. Analyze the problem. Students are asked to start having discussions related to the material they discussed while studying using English. Starting from explaining, describing the material discussed.
5. Summing up. Students are asked to conclude the results of the entire discussion process that has been discussed. Teachers can also ask students to practice using English in front of the class and ask students to tell what they have discussed.

d. The advantages of small group discussion

The advantages offered by the small group discussion strategy in learning English are related to how to train students to practice pronunciation in speaking English. Baumann et al. (2020) state that SGD session on impostor syndrome is effective to promote resident wellness and resiliency. Then, Bungum et al. (2018) SGD can improve students' deep understanding toward a material. In case the students led to articulate conceptual adversity, exchange perspectives and generate new questions. SGD is letting students express and investigate ideas with active oral participation. SGD can lead students to a better problem solving with dissimilarities understanding. There are some advantages in using small group discssion to improve students' English communication skill, such as:

- Students can communicate intensively.
- Students have same time to have discussion or to express their idea.

- Students become more confident in communicating because of a small scope environment.
- Students consciously pay attention to the interlocutor when conducting discussions because their attention is limited.
- All students actively participated in the discussion.
- Teaching about respect the opinion and can improve the collaboration skill amongg them.
- Teaching about tolerance value.
- Improving new knowledge because with SDG they can sharing and get new informationn from other students.
- Hsieh et al. (2021) state that SDG promotes students to generate more vocabularies.

Thus, through the advantages provided by SDG, it can provide direction to teachers to help and give solution to students to improve their communication skills in English and it is very necessary for teachers to train students on how to give opinions related to the theme or materials being discussed. Lin et al. (2022) menambahkan bahwa SDG improve students communication skills and group work strategies, maintaining harmonious discussion and group participations. It produce positive classroom atmosphere.

Conclusion

Interesting learning can build students' interest and learning motivation in order to be able to develop their ability to communicate in English. Utilization of learning methods can make the learning process run well so that students can improve their English communication skills. One method that can be used to improve English communication skills is through small group discussions. While small group discussions can help students communicate intensely in English, students must also be able to understand, respect, and express their ideas and opinions in order for their language achievement to be developed. Through the SDG method, students also practice speaking English by sharing their experiences, ideas, and opinions related to the

material discussed later, because small group coverage can also increase students' confidence in communicating using English.

References

- Arja, S. B., Ponnusamy, K., Kottathveetil, P., Ahmed, T. F. A., Fatteh, R., & Arja, S. B. (2020). Effectiveness of small group discussions for teaching specific pharmacology concepts. *Medical Science Educator*, 30(2), 713–718. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-020-00938-9>
- Baumann, N., Faulk, C., Vanderlan, J., Chen, J., & Bhayani, R. K. (2020). Small-group discussion sessions on imposter syndrome. *MedEdPORTAL: The Journal of Teaching and Learning Resources*, 16, 11004. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.11004
- Bohari, L. (2020). Improving speaking skills through small group discussin at eleventh grade students of SMA Plus Munirul Arifin NW Praya. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 7(1), 68. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v7i1.1441>
- Bungum, B., Bøe, M. V., & Henriksen, E. K. (2018). Quantum talk: How small-group discussions may enhance students' understanding in quantum physics. *Science Education*, 102(4), 856–877. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sce.21447>
- Cheng, X., Xie, H., Hong, J., Bao, G., & Liu, Z. (2022). Teacher' s emotional display affects students' perceptions of teacher' s competence, feelings , and productivity in online small-group discussions. 12(January), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.795708>
- Hsieh, M. Y., Lin, T. J., Sallade, R., Ha, S. Y., Kraatz, E., & Shin, S. (2021). A collaborative small-group discussion approach to improving fifth graders' use of academic, relational, social, and emotional vocabulary. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 106. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101744>
- Jung, T., Seung, L., Ha, Y., Ting, W., Ying, L., Chiu, J., & Ru, Y. (2019). Effects of collaborative small - group discussions on early adolescents ' social reasoning. *Reading and Writing*, 0123456789. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09946-7>
- Lin, T. J., Kraatz, E., Ha, S. Y., Hsieh, M. Y., Glassman, M., Nagpal, M., Sallade, R., & Shin, S. (2022). Shaping classroom social experiences through collaborative small-group discussions. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92(1), 131–154. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12442>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage Publications Incorporated. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2015.975966>
- Nassaji, H. (2015). Qualitative and descriptive research: Data type versus data analysis. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(2), 129–132. <https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1177/1362168815572747>
- Prayudha, J. (2022). EFL students' perception on the use of social media platforms as learning tools. *JETLi: Journal of English Teaching and Linguistics*, 3(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.55616/jetli.v3i1.226>
- Prayudha, J. S. (2021). Students' problem face in online learning amidt pandemic. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching & Education*, 3(2), 2021. <http://journals.umkt.ac.id/index.php/acitya>
- Prayudha, S. J. & Pradana, A. (2023). An Analysis o f Students ' Difficulties In English Conversation Practice. 2(3), 215–222.
- Resti, M. D., & Anwar, D. (2019). Teaching argumentative writing (Discussion Text) to Senior High School Students by using small group discussion. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(1).
- Rosadi, F. S., Nuraeni, C., & Priadi, A. (2020). The use of small group discussion strategy in teaching English speaking. *Pujangga*, 6(2), 134. <https://doi.org/10.47313/pujangga.v6i2.992>
- Wijaya, M. I., Suzanna, S., Utomo, D., & Adnizio, K. (2021). Analysing the Impact of Social Presence on Student Satisfaction through Small Group Discussion in A Synchronous Online Learning. *Proceedings - 2021 International Conference on Software Engineering and Computer Systems and 4th International Conference on Computational Science and Information Management, ICSECS-ICOCSIM 2021*, 136–142. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICSECS52883.2021.00032>
- Williams, A. T., & Svensson, M. (2020). Student teachers' collaborative learning of science in small-group discussions. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2020.1788141>
- Zed, M. (2004). *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*. Yayasan Obor Indonesia.