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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ON IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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**Abstract:** *Speaking is a crucial aspect of language acquisition as it allows students to demonstrate their competence in the language they are learning. However, various obstacles can impact students' speaking abilities, including a lack of confidence, a limitation of vocabulary and grammar, and ineffective teaching methods. The objectives of this research were to investigate whether the effectiveness of Small Group Discussion improves speaking ability in descriptive text at the seventh grade of SMPN 14 Samarinda in the academic year 2023/2024 and to determine whether Small Group Discussion helps students enhance their speaking ability in descriptive text in the seventh grade at S MPN 14 Samarinda in the academic year 2023/2024. This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. The sample consisted of seventh-grade students from SMPN 14 Samarinda, specifically classes 7A and 7C. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and speaking tests to describe the progress of the action. The average score and class percentage were used as a representation of students' speaking improvement. The findings of this research was there are increase of 0.35% in the experimental class (30 to 40.5) and an increase of 0.15% in the control class (26.06 to 29.94) which means that Small Group Discussion has a better and significant improvement compared to conventional learning. According to Mann-whitney test, Asymp, significance value (2-tailed) was <0.001, which is less than  $\alpha$  (0.005). It could be concluded that  $H_a$  accepted and  $H_o$  refused. It means small group discussion had significant effect on students speaking skill in the descriptive text at seventh grade students of SMPN 14 Samarinda*

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## PENDAHULUAN

Speaking is a crucial component of language development and is considered to be one of the productive language skills. Speaking, like writing, is a productive ability that entails using voice to convey meaning to other people, as described by Spatt, Marry, et al. Speaking involves both receptive participation and active or productive participation. Speaking skills are one of the aspects that students must master according to the merdeka curriculum. This aims to ensure that students

have sufficient provisions before stepping up to higher levels of English education. But, the process of learning language does not always run clearly, there are still many obstacles faced by students in English.

Based on the English teacher's explanation at SMPN 14 Samarinda, many students have low motivation to learn English moreover to practice their speaking ability. It was because the students is difficult to communicate and lacked confidence in their ability to respond in speaking. The study determined that the difficulty is also caused by the teacher's instructional method and style. As a result, students become bored, uncomfortable with class activities, and are less confidence in speaking or even discussing the content in English class.

As a teacher, after understanding and learning about students' challenges speaking, the teacher should assist students in resolving their difficulty. One method for assisting students is to use an appropriate strategy in the classroom that will pique their interest in learning to speak English. A small group discussion is an alternate teaching style that may be used in the classroom. There are three reasons why we may use small group discussions to improve our speaking skills. The first conversation is intended to improve teacher-student engagement and student-student verbal communication in the classroom. Second, the conversation facilitates genuine personal engagement and learning. Learning might be about material, skills, attitudes, or procedures. Third, it promotes responsible and autonomous learning among students. So, the Small Group maybe a good alternate teaching method to apply in the classroom.

Therefore, this research aims to find out whether or the effectiveness of Small group Discussion improve speaking ability and help students to enhance their speaking ability in descriptive text at the seventh grade of SMPN 14 Samarinda in the academic year 2023/2024.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This research has connections to other studies. The first study was a research conducted by Nur Elmi Hidayati and Batdal Niati with the title "The Effect of Using Small Group Discussion Technique on Students' Speaking Skill at XI Grade of Mas Kepenuhan". The objective of this study was to determine the influence of the Small Group Discussion approach on students' speaking abilities in narrative literature. This research was carried out in March 2019. The sample consisted of eleventh grade students from Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) Kepenuhan. The research approach was experimental research, and the sample size in this , was 40 students. The researcher observed that the students' post-test in the independent sample T-test was 0.000, which is less than 0.005 with a two-tailed probability. It means small group discussion had significant effect on students speaking skill in the narrative text.

The Second study was a research journal entitled "Teaching Speaking Skill Through Small Group Discussion Technique at The Accounting Study Program" written by Rivi Antoni. This study was the outcome of action research conducted in the classroom to try to find the answer to the issue of what factors affected and how small group discussion approach may help students become better communicators. This study was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of five encounters with the exam included. Data analysis comparing basis scores throughout two cycles. It could be determined that small group discussion increased the students' speaking competence at Pasir Pengarain University's second semester accounting students.

The third study was research conducted by Richard K. Tan, Ronald B. Polong, Leila M. Collates, Joel M. Torres entitled " Influence of Small Group Discussion on the English Oral

Communication Self-Efficacy of Filipino ESL Learners in Central Luzon". The study used a quasi-experimental, non-probability sampling technique with 30 senior high school students from a public secondary Science school in Central Luzon to investigate the effect of the small group discussion method on the students' English oral communication self-efficacy. The paired-sample t-test on English oral communication self-efficacy found that the mean score after the small group discussion intervention ( $\bar{x}=3.605$ ,  $SD=.356$ ) was statistically equal to the mean score before the intervention ( $\bar{x}=3.463$ ,  $SD=.398$ ,  $t(29)= -1.273$ ,  $p>.05$ ), indicating that the intervention did not significantly increase English communication oral self-efficacy.

The fourth study is a research journal entitled "The Impact of Discussion Activities on Improving Students' Fluency in Speaking Skill" by Amal Musa Karam Allah Mohammed & Rawda Bashir Abdulla Ahmed had a purpose to investigate the effect of discussion activities on enhancing students' fluency in speaking. Classroom observations were used to acquire study data. This study was carried out during the first semester of the academic year (2019-2020). This study's overall sample size was 60 respondents, including 20 English language teachers and 40 female students from Al- Jouf University's First Common Year (FCY). An analytical descriptive research was conducted. This study can help English language teachers improve their teaching and learning by engaging students in discussion activities that increase motivation, confidence, and fluency, ultimately improving speaking skills

The fifth study is research entitled "Students' Perspectives On The Implementation Of Small-Group Discussion In Developing Speaking Skills" written by Zeti Kusuma Dewi, 2023. The study aimed to explore eighth-grade students' perceptions on the small group discussion approach used by instructors to improve their speaking abilities in class. The study followed a descriptive- qualitative strategy. Purposive sampling was used to choose 55 eighth grade students from two classes at SMP Islam Al-Falaah for research purposes. This study collected data using closed-ended surveys and semi-structured interviews, with Google Forms and interview guidelines serving as research tools. . Small group discussions enhance student motivation, teamwork, language development, and reduce anxiety. The students' average scores climbed dramatically, from 85 to 95.7 in class 8.1 and from 84.2 to 88.6 in class 8.2 Thus, Small group discussions were effective as a learning tool for eighth grade English speaking classrooms.

## METHOD

The research design used the quantitative research approach. The quantitative approach is a set of strategy, processes, and concepts used to study psychological, social, and economic phenomena using numerical patterns. A wide range of numerical data is collected for quantitative research. The researcher does quantitative research to evaluate the efficiency of the Small Group Discussion approach in developing students' speaking abilities at SMPN 14 Samarinda. Based on the tested hypotheses, the experimental and control classes' results will be compared. This research used *experimental quantitative research method*.

This study was designed using *experimental research methodology*. This was quasi-experimental research, using a *non-equivalent control group design*. A group is treated to an experimental change and then compared to a control group. Quasi- experimental study designs, as the name indicates employ nonexperimental (or non-researcher-induced) variance in the main independent variable of interest, effectively replicating situations of experimentation in which some participants are randomly exposed to treatment while others didn't do the same. The

pretest compares the two groups before treatment, whereas the posttest assesses the immediate impact of the therapy on the outcome variables. In addition to the pre- test and immediate post-test, a delayed post-test or posttest is sometimes used to assess the treatment's long-term effects. The inclusion of the control group allows researchers to establish if any observed changes from the pretest to the posttest in the experimental group are due to the experimental therapy or may be attributable to other factors such as testing effects or maturation. Because both the experimental and control groups take the exams at the same time, time-related confounds are reduced.

The population of this research was the seventh grade of SMPN 14 Samarinda, it consists of seven classes. The sample of this research were class VIII A and VIIIC, each class consists of 30 and 31 students, so the total students as the samples of this research was 61 students of seventh grade. This research used some tools to gathering data such as observation, tests, and documentation. The test will be given to the students to find out whether Small Group Discussion can improve students' speaking ability , using the material that has been taught. The test in this research was the oral test based on speaking scoring rubric by Penny McKay. The scores from this test are used as a measure of students' speaking abilities. The analysis data in this research used Mann-Whitney Wilcoxon test to answer the research problems.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected through test of 63 students at the seventh grade of SMPN 14 Samarinda. In this research, researcher used SPSS Application (ver. 29) to calculate the data. In the pre-test of experimental class showed that the total number of data collected was 63, with 32 students from experimental class and 31 students from control class. The mean or average score of two classes was slightly different. Experimental class is 30, while control class is 26,06. Moreover, the highest score

categories for both classes are also have differences. The highest score of experimental class is 40, while the control class is 44. For the lowest score of both classes were same, it was 20 in experiment class and control class. Hence, it can be concluded that the pre- test scores of the experimental class and the control class doesn't look much different. While, the mean score of post-test of experimental class is 40,5 and the control class is 29,93. Therefore, it can be seen that the experimental class has higher significant score than the control class After the analysis of two mean scores, it is known that the mean score between the experimental group and the control group was different, students in the experimental group got better results than the students in the control group, and to examine whether the hypothesis was accepted or refused, the researcher used statistical data of the Mann-Whitney test as nonparametric hypothesis test for compares two independent groups.

### Descriptive Statistics

N		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PreTest Eksperimen	32	20	40	30.00	5.279
PostTest Eksperimen	32	24	56	40.50	9.242

<b>PreTest Control</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26.06</b>	<b>6.011</b>
<b>PostTest Control</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>29.94</b>	<b>7.991</b>
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	<b>31</b>				

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the students' speaking mastery ability has not been maximized, because the control and experimental pretest scores in English learning of VII A and VII C students have an average of 30.00 and

26.06. It can also be seen that the average result of the posttest of the experimental class (40.50) is greater than the average result of the posttest value of the control class (29.94), this proves that there is an increase in the mastery of speaking of students in class IV A and VII C SMPN 14 Samarinda after applied of the Small Group Discussion method but the score still lower than KKM.

Based on the results of post-test data analysis shows that the experimental group's learning outcomes who taught by using Small Group Discussion have an average value of 40.5 with the highest score 56 and the lowest score 24. While the control group's learning outcomes who taught without using Small Group Discussion has an average score of 29.93 with the highest score 48 and the lowest score 20. From the average post-test scores for learning outcomes, it can be found that the increase in the average outcomes of the experimental group is greater than that of the control group. The researcher used SPSS Application (ver. 29) to calculate the data.

#### Ranks

<b>Class</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>
<b>Speaking Learning Outcomes Experiment Class</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>41.20</b>	<b>1318.50</b>
<b>Control Class</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>22.50</b>	<b>697.50</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>		

Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

Speaking Learning Outcomes

<b>Mann-Whitney U</b>	<b>201.5</b>
<b>Wilcoxon Signed-Rank</b>	<b>697.5</b>
<b>Z</b>	<b>-.111</b>
<b>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>&lt;.001</b>

a. Grouping Variable: Class

According on statistical testing, the Asymp, significance (2-tailed.) value of the Mann-whitney test is <0.001. Mean rank of experiment class(41.20) greater than control class(22.50). This means there is a significant differences among the learning achievement of students who apply the Small Group Discussion method and the learning achievement of students who do not apply the Small Group Discussion method.

The Small Group Discussion method used in this research was carried out four times in the experimental class. While in the control class using conventional methods as usual. The use of conventional methods in learning in the control class did not have a significant impact on the vocabulary mastery of students in the class, because the use of conventional methods in learning was less effective, just like the research conducted by Hutapea that conventional learning carried out on class VIII students at SMP Negeri 27 Medan could not be applied properly. Meanwhile, learning carried out using English songs in the experimental class was carried out to increase students' vocabulary mastery and strengthen students' understanding of the material and make the learning process more interactive.

Based on the research results, it was obtained that the vocabulary owned by students was relatively low. It can be seen from the achievement of the average pre-test score for the control class of 58.8 and the experimental class of 61.33. One of the factors that causes the low English vocabulary of students is the lack of application of appropriate learning methods to increase students' mastery of English vocabulary. This is in line with research conducted by Ayu Bella that one of the factors that influences English vocabulary learning in students is the use of appropriate learning methods that can affect the achievement of optimal learning outcomes for children.

Following various approaches in every lesson, students' command of vocabulary in the English increased. The average post-test score obtained showed an increase. With an average score of 86.88, the experimental class received treatment in the form of vocabulary development through singing utilizing English songs as a learning media. With an average pre-test score of 67.8, there was no discernible difference in the control group. The significance of a learning outcome obtained by students is not based on the KKM score standard but rather the significance seen based on the increase in learning outcomes or the increase in scores that occur between the pre-test and post-test. It may be inferred from the data that was collected and from



other studies that the experimental class that used the singing method had a higher level of vocabulary mastery in English than the control group.

The data obtained from the control and experimental classes were in a normal distribution, both the results of the pre-test and post-test. This is proven by the results of the analysis requirements test using Wilcoxon test that revealed the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.001 is less than the  $\alpha$  level of 5% (0.05), rejecting H0. This suggested that English Songs has an effect of vocabulary mastery of SMPN 1 Sangasanga students.

## CONCLUSION

This research was done using an experimental design to determine if English song has effect on in increasing students' vocabulary mastery. Based on previous studies obstacles, it is possible to determine:

1. This research showed that the use of English songs was useful in increasing English vocabulary mastery at the eighth grade of SMPN 1 Sangasanga in the academic year 2024/2025. The findings showed that the Asymp. Sig. value of the experimental class increased as indicated by a 2-tailed p value of 0.001, less than the 5% threshold (0.05) rejecting the null hypothesis (H0).
2. In this research, there was a significant difference in students' vocabulary mastery with learning using English songs which was marked by an increase in post-test results from the pre-test of 0.25% in the experimental class after being given treatment compared to the control classes which only increased by 0.9%. This means that the use of English songs is better than conventional learning methods.

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HALAMAN INI SENGAJA DIKOSONGKAN