



Teacher Experience In Using Sgd to Teach Writing: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract

This Research explore the experience of an English teacher in implementing Small Group Discussion (SGD) to teach writing in EFL Junior Highschool, Using qualitative method with narrative inquiry approach, this study highlighted how the subject with over 13 years of teaching experience utilizes vocabularies building, and skill based student grouping to improve classroom participation. The findings indicated that the subject started his teaching with daily vocabulary exercise, followed by student collaboration in suitable groups that support and develop their writing skills. the teacher's ability to motivate learners and adapt the teaching program to students' needs plays a crucial role in the effective implementation of SGD. These insights align with previous studies by Setiawan and Wulansari (2020) as well as Larasati (2023), emphasizing the importance of foundational vocabulary, targeted grouping, and flexible instructional design. This research found that the subject of this research use a more specified grouping to further increases students activeness in the classroom. Grouping according the students skill level, according to the subject, could increases the participation of students in the classroom.

Keywords: *Small Group Discussion, Writing, Teacher Experience, Vocabulary, Student Grouping*

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INTRODUCTION

English, as an international language, has a significant role in global communication in the modern era. English language skills open up greater opportunities for access to information, education, and careers in the future. The curriculum in schools today has been designed to encourage the use of innovative learning methods that actively involve students. Methods such as game-based learning, songs, and digital technology are effective approaches to attracting students' attention. For example, research by Richards and Rodgers (2021) shows that technology-based learning approaches increase student engagement in the English learning process. With this innovative method, students not only learn the language but also develop other skills, such as collaboration and problem solving.

In an effort to create interesting and meaningful learning, the use of innovative methods such as game-based learning, songs, and digital technology can be combined with approaches that encourage active interaction between students. These methods not only focus on individual skills but also open up space for the development of social and collaborative skills. According to Slavin (2019), learning that involves social interaction in groups can improve students' understanding of concepts and interpersonal skills. Therefore, it is important to integrate active learning methods that provide opportunities for students to interact directly in small groups, so that the learning process becomes more dynamic and effective. One approach that can support this is small group discussion, where students learn through collaboration and active communication to achieve a deeper understanding of the material (Gillies, 2016).

Small group discussion is one of the active learning methods that involves students working collaboratively in small groups. This method aims to help students solve problems, share ideas, and understand learning materials in depth. According to Arends (2014), small group learning allows students to interact with each other, exchange ideas, and utilize collective knowledge in achieving common learning goals. In this context, the role of the teacher is as a facilitator who provides direction and motivates students to participate actively.

The benefits of small group discussion include improving communication skills, cooperation, and critical thinking skills. This method provides students with the opportunity to express their opinions, listen to other people's points of view, and practice resolving conflicts or differences of opinion that arise in discussions. According to Gillies (2016), small group discussion-based learning can build students' confidence in conveying ideas and train their social skills. In addition, small group discussions are also effective in improving students' critical thinking skills, because they are invited to analyze information, make logical arguments, and draw appropriate conclusions.

In learning English, small group discussion is considered a very effective method because it actively involves students in the learning process. According to research conducted by Ningrum and Wardhani (2021), this method helps students develop their speaking skills through direct interaction with peers. In addition, students also get the opportunity to practice using English in situations that are close to everyday communication, which can ultimately increase their confidence in speaking English. Through small group discussions, students not only understand the subject matter in depth but also acquire interpersonal skills that are important for everyday life. Therefore, this method is very relevant to be applied in active learning, especially to improve students' speaking skills in learning English. Although Small Group Discussion (SGD) is theoretically recognized as an effective learning method in improving student abilities, the reality in the field shows that its implementation still faces various obstacles. One gap that is often found is between expectations for this method and its practice in the classroom. Research shows that the success of the SGD method is greatly influenced by teacher readiness and support for learning facilities (Rachman, 2021). Teachers often face challenges in implementing SGD, especially in English subjects. Obstacles such as lack of teacher training, limited time, and diverse student abilities are factors that hinder the effectiveness of the SGD method (Amelia & Santoso, 2022).

The application of the small group discussion (SGD) method in English learning in schools often faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is limited time. Learning with this method requires more time than the lecture method, especially in the process of dividing groups, giving instructions, and monitoring discussions in each group (Setiawan & Lestari, 2022).

Teachers often find it difficult to complete all the planned lesson materials within the limited time available. In addition, the large number of students in the class is another obstacle. This also has an impact on the difficulty of ensuring that all groups receive the same attention and guidance from the teacher (Fitria, 2021). Another challenge is the lack of supporting facilities, such as the availability of specific teaching materials for the SGD method, teaching aids, or adequate classrooms that can reduce the effectiveness of discussions and hinder the learning process (Anwar, 2023). These challenges show that although the SGD method has many benefits in improving students' speaking skills, its implementation requires support in terms of time, facilities, and readiness of teacher and student competencies to achieve optimal results.

The Small Group Discussion (SGD) method has great potential in improving speaking ability. However, the implementation of this method in the field does not always run smoothly

due to the various challenges faced by teachers. These challenges need to be explored further to find practical solutions that allow the SGD method to be implemented effectively in the classroom. This study aims to identify the main challenges faced by teachers in schools in using the SGD method and provide strategic recommendations to overcome these obstacles. A planned and directed SGD approach can improve student participation, speaking ability, and collaboration skills, which are important elements in English learning (Putri & Hartati, 2021).

Based on research conducted by Puspitasari et al., (2023), it is known that this study revealed that students have a positive perception of the use of Small Group Discussion (SGD) in improving English speaking skills. However, the challenges faced include lack of vocabulary and self-confidence. Other research conducted by Putri and Hamzah (2023) also found that students have a positive perception of the use of SGD in English speaking activities, which helps them be more active and confident. From the research references above, it can be seen that small group discussions are quite effective in learning English for students. However, unfortunately there are not many studies that explain the challenges for teachers in using the small group discussion method in English learning (Larasati, 2023).

Through this research, the results obtained are expected to view from an experienced teacher perspective to understand Small Group Discussion in different perspective, especially Small Group Discussion in writing. Thus, this research hopes to give a direct impact on learning practices in the field, especially teaching writing with SGD method.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a Qualitative Narrative-Inquiry approach. According to Lane's (2024), narrative inquiry uses experience as the first and foremost way to be studied, thus underlying the research question to as a goal to solve through the positionally, interpretation, meanings, which acquired and analyzed through the progress of data collected.

In this research, it used a qualitative research as it explore the subjective meanings of the participant and their point of view of certain subject, thus allowing the researcher to dig into participants' worldview (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

In this study, the researcher used narrative-inquiry approach research to understand subject point-of-view regarding of the use of SGD in writing. In qualitative research, researchers analyzed and reported the interview in the the form of analysis for the study. This is because the purpose of this study is to explore the challenges and problem solving through teacher experience in implementing Small Group Discussion in students English learning.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the result of interviews and data analysis, including teachers experiences. The data to be presented and catagorized into two themes that represents the narrative flow of research question.

A. Findings

The findings was collected to answer two research questions. The first research question is What are EFL Teachers' experience in implementing small group discussions in teaching writing?. The first theme is "Teacher experience through teaching small group discussion in writing".

The second research question: What are the challenges faced by teachers and way to overcome the problems? The theme is challenge and how to overcome them. The data gathered through gaining a main idea of the conversation in the quotes.

1. Teacher experience through teaching small group discussion in writing

A. Vocabularries Building

To start and learn using small group discussion in writing effectively, the need of students knowledge should be measured accordingly. To have a discussion, learner should be able to communicate, interact, and understand the objective, task accordingly.

It started with MR. T point of view on learning english, through his 13 years of teaching experience, the need of vocabularies for students crucial in the flow of discussion, be it on doing task, interact, and even searching for ideas. Letting the students adapt to daily vocabularies in learning is a step on building the students foundation to learn english, especially towards small group discussion. In his teaching experiences, students were tasked to memorize vocabularies through making sentences in groups. In the process, the students hopefully will be able to understand and comprehend the vocabularies and topic.

Similar to Setiawan, B., & Wulansari, D. (2020) in enriching students vocabularies, In this group, the students not only exercising their abilities to in writing, but also in listening and speaking. So all four of english proficiency is exercised in this learning process, as an example: the classroom divided into a group of 5 students., then, they were tasked to have a spelling bee. Or the teacher uttered a word, then the group of students write sentences of said word.

“as of 13 years of teaching, classroom usually started off with a group exercise not only in writing but also on all skills of english language which started from daily vocabularies first.” [N(MR. T).6-7]

With the main idea of conversation 6-7 from MR. T, it can summarized through MR. T 13 years experience, he uses group exercise of collaborative learning to integrated english skills through consistency that started with vocabularies, this was made for learners to be able to partake and active in Small Group Discussion subject.

B. Suitable Grouping

A suitable grouping for students is based of their skill and abilities. Which means, the student grouped according to their skill level to increase their participation in the discussion. The true meaning of skill is based of the previous 4 skills of english: Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking. Through this 4 skills the students were rated accordingly through teaching progress in the classroom.

According MR. T, the skill level of students were rated through these attainment:

- a. Speaking as an advanced level in english.
- b. Writing as an intermediate-level
- c. While reading and listening as a must have competence to learning english SGD-

Writing.

Students level will be rated accordingly through their abilities in in those 4-skills of english. Which will be raised accordingly by students progress in exercising their english skills.

Afterall, if the students were not grouped accordingly to their skill-level, a rift-of-communications and participation will be raised in the learning progress. The lower skilled students may become apathics towards their own groups and not participate much in it.

While it may have a great disparity towards the learner skill level between each group, it will be able to increase the students motivation to learn and gain understanding from the study process. (Larasati, Dewi. 2023)

“students development starts from their participation in the classroom, by giving them the same skill level in the group, it will increase their participation in the classroom. The grouping process is based on 4-skill skill level in english, namely: speaking (advance); Writing (intermediate); Listening and Reading (Start).” [N(MR. T).6-11]

MR. T felt that in the classroom, students participation is an important step for students to develop their skills, to do this, MR. T made a specified grouping in the classroom through students skill level, namely:

- Advanced skill, which based on the students' speaking skills.
- Intermediate: based on the students writing skills.
- Beginner: that uses Listening and reading as a standard.

Thus, it is hoped to gain a more balanced lineup for students to gain active participation and general understanding of subject in the classroom.

C. Teachers role in Small Group Discussion process

In the process of small group discussion, the role of teacher lay in their abilities to control the flow of discussion. The process for of learning through SGD is important as it actively engages the student in sharing their knowledge, abilities, and skill, which is the most easiest for learners to absorb.

A big classroom is complex, and the use of small group discussion is to make the assesment of student competence is easily showed, making it easier for the teacher to take the next step in the flow of teaching and learning process. In language teaching programs, the use of small group discussion is actively showed its due role in the classroom, as it maket he teacher able to identify students whose understanding of teaching material has not reached the learning target.

Rachman, T. (2021), inferred that, the use of effective Small Group Discussion would be effective as long as teacher experience sufficed and able to adapt and evolve learning programs.

"The use of Small Group Discussion for writing is effective., teacher's role in the classroom is to keep the discussion in place and to be able to make programs suitable for the students in the classroom." [N(MR. T).11-14]

MR. T felt that Small Group Discussion is an effective way to learn english foreign language, whereas the teacher able to manage and guide the discussion and made corresponding programs that suitable for the students' needs.

2. Challenge and Solutions in using SGD writing experience

A. In Small Group Discussion: Writing

The challenge faced in Small group discussion in writing is that the students level were varied in the first place, the difference in level cannot be avoided as every students has their own unique concept of understanding the languages.

By grouping the students by their skill level, it can reduce the students grouping process variables, as in making each student to work out together in accomplishing the task assigned by the lecturer. In this context, the participation among the students in their own group is crucial for the lecturer to score or assesst the learner learning process.

Furthermore, by grouping the students according to their skill level, the learner will grow a competitive motivation in accordance to each group. The reason behind it is that students are also a social beings, (Ismail (2018)), which means, in this context the students will also have a sense of responsibility in their own teams to be the best of the others.

"The crucial challenge, faced In Small Group Discussion Writing, is that there were difference in level for grouping, especially in their comprehension for the subject, that's whu we must divide the students by their level accordingly for their group." [N(MR. T).14-18]

For the challenge in SGD's Writing, Mr Teguh felt the same way as it is in any other SDG's method, the main challenge is that there are variations of students comprehension level, making it harder to ensure a more balanced grouping to ensures an active intereaction in the classroom.

B. On Students

In SGD, the role of students itself is important, especially on how they pay attention to the subjects, without it, their own participation in SGD is negligible, and even could make other students in the group followed them. That's why the role of teacher in the classroom is also to motivate the students to pay heed and attention in the classroom.

The motivation and attention in the classroom is important as it is a crucial factor for the student to learn with the use of SGD, students motivation to learn is related to how we give attention to the students. The students attention towards the learning materials is mainly related to how we give the students attention in itself.

Students, especially those in their puberty stage has complex amount of expression, and the role of teacher is not just to give them motivation, but also attention to them suitably.

"To make the students learn is to make them pay attention in the classroom, to make the students pay attention to the classroom is for the lecturer to give motivation to, and to give relatable motivation to the student is for lecturer to have attention to the students." [N(MR. T).18-26]

Students' attention in the classroom intersect along with the motivation of the students in the classroom, by giving the students attention, and engagement in the classroom, the more it will progress their motivation to learn, this motivational strategies is present through teachers awareness and care for students' individual needs.

C. On learning Programs

Teaching programs in the classroom has its own guidelines, especially in SGD, for many lecturers the guidelines serve as a step to adapt towards the students ability and comprehension along with their development (T.Rahman; 2021).

Adaptation in teaching should be based on learners need without the need to deviate from the guidelines. in Mr, Teguh context, his guidelines in teaching would be to let the learners learn the vocabularies through native speakers (via video/Youtube) the students then will memorize it, write the vocabs, then develop it through their own group (SGD).

Lastly, after their development of said vocabs, the learners then presents it in front of the classroom by their own groups, here, the problem faced will also include the time to make and presents the result of discussion, the time constraint in this last step is crucial in the classroom, as it may not let all the students to perform their best and even didn't get to perform in front of the class. This resulted in the fewer participation for the students, and lack of teaching assesment for the teacher.

"The crucial challenge, faced In learning programs in SGD-Writing is that there were not enough time to do a step-by-step guideline in the classroom as it has limited time to perform yet many students in the big classroom that's why we must adapt and evolve the programs while focused on the purpose of the study." [N(MR. T)27-50.]

Lastly, through MR. T years of experience, the main issues on SGD's Writing challenge mainly on the time constraint it took to run the teaching and learning programs', this happens because the big classroom cannot accomodate time it took to apply the structured learning method accordingly. Still, the need for teacher to adapt and evolve the programs that suits the learners and classroom conditions to gain the objective that alligns with the core objective of the lesson.

B. Discussion

Findings showed that previous research has made this study more aligned on MR. T experience in teaching, it shows that small group discussion is an effective method to increase students' activeness in the classroom, English skills and abilities but not without its challenges in implementing it.

1. Active Learning Through SGD

As expressed by MR. T, "The use of Small Group Discussion is effective in learning, teacher's role in the classroom is to keep the discussion in place and to be able to make programs suitable for the students". This supports Larasati's (2023) findings, which highlight how active student engagement benefits both learning outcomes and teacher experience.

Additionally, the initial emphasis on daily vocabulary before transitioning to writing supports Setiawan B's (2023) conclusion that vocabulary development is a foundational element in improving students' writing abilities. Rachman (2023) further reinforces this by noting the importance of encouraging student participation to improve language competence.

2. Grouping Based on Skill Levels

MR. T reported that grouping students based on their individual English skill levels (e.g., speaking, writing, listening, reading) fosters more effective participation and engagement: "The grouping process is based on 4-skill level in English... it will increase their participation". This aligns with Rachman's (2023) emphasis on differentiated strategies to accommodate diverse student proficiency, particularly in larger classroom settings.

3. Teacher's Role in students' motivation.

Motivation emerged as a central component in classroom success. MR. T stressed that "to make the students learn is to make them pay attention... and to give relatable motivation to the student is for lecturer to have attention to the students" [N(MR. T).18–26]. This reflects a relational pedagogy where the teacher's attentiveness to students' needs enhances motivation and engagement. Larasati (2023) similarly identifies teacher awareness and connection with students as key to maintaining student activity.

4. Challenge in Implementation

Time constraint was noted as a major challenge. MR. T reflected, "There were not enough time to do a step-by-step guideline... many students in the big classroom... we must adapt and evolve the programs". This is echoed in Larasati (2023), who reported time limitations hindered optimal teaching strategies, and in Setiawan B (2023), who emphasized the need for gradual progression to improve student writing skills.

Furthermore, Rachman (2023) found that implementing strategies for different student levels often depends on the teacher's skill and experience. MR. T's comment that "we must divide the students by their level accordingly", indicating that differentiated instruction remains a persistent challenge in large classrooms.

5. New Findings

Findings showed that a suitable grouping through a specified grouping in the classroom students skill level:

- Advanced skill, which based on the students' speaking skills.
- Intermediate: based on the students writing skills.
- Beginner: that uses Listening and reading as a standard.

Might be a newer approach for teachers to address a grouping in the classroom, this may open a suitable way to increase students' participation and attention to the classroom.

Furthermore, other findings align themselves between the participant's narrative and contemporary studies. SGD appears beneficial in fostering active learning and writing skill development, especially when supported by strategic grouping and relational motivation. However,

challenges related to time-constrant, skill deviation, and program adaptation exist, requiring a more flexible, and experience-drivem teaching appraoach.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The goal of this study is to to view from an experienced teacher perspective to understand Small Group Discussion in different perspective, especially Small Group Discussion in writing. Through interview research, and narrative-inquiry data collection, the study was able to gain a collective data which support and gain a new understanding towards small group discussion in writing.

The perspective of experienced teachers is found out to be similar to previous research, starting from basic vocabularries, active students in SGD's, and the need of students participation. However, through this research it is found out that trained and experienced teacher will perceive students personal needs and turns it into their motivation to learn. Another things to note is that a qualified teacher will not progress their teaching by giving a random grouping in their classroom, the subject of this research, MR. T, felt that the need of suitable skill groupin is needed to increases the students participation and activeness in the classroom.

MR. T experience in 13 years of teaching, he started off by giving the topics on vocabularries, through this, it then went further to make the students understand them by developing said vocabularries in students own groups that will be observed and supervised by the lecturer in the classroom to make the teaching and learning programme effective and progressive.

Teaching through Small Group Discussion is not without any challenges, based on 3 categories: (1). the challenge in using SGD; (2). Challenges in teaching students; and (3). Challenges in maintaining guidelines in teaching programs. These three categories hold a crucial role in keeping teaching and learning progress effective, using SGD in the classroom should be able to make learners participation active while also keep grabbing students attention on the topic and keep maintaining the program guidelines. These could be maintained by starting from the basics vocabulary (Setiawan, B., & Wulansari, D. (2020)), effective grouping by the students skill levels, increasing their motivations , while also for the teacher to adapt and adhered to the program guidelines (Larasati, Dewi. 2023).

Suggestion

For future Research

Future study should involve more teachers to gain a more comprehensive understanding in SGD for writing. Understanding students experience in SGD's writing could offer a deeper insight into their motivation to study. It is also recommended to have a longitudinal-study in exploring the effects of structured groupings, or basic vocabularries approaches on students experiences over-time. Including participants from public school teachers or other site and participant could be a comparison for this paper.

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