

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter starting background of the study and also focuses on identification of problems, research question, limitation of the problem, objective of study, significance of study, and definition of the key terms.

A. Background of the study

Language is a communication tool used by humans to interact with other members of society. It serves as a bridge for sharing ideas, expressing emotions, and facilitating social interactions. Through language, individuals convey their thoughts and intentions, negotiate meanings, and build relationships. Mastery of effective language use is essential for personal and professional success, as it allows individuals to engage meaningfully in conversations, collaborate with others, and navigate complex social and cultural situation. As linguist Noam Chomsky has emphasized, "Language is not just a tool for communication but a fundamental component of human cognition and social interaction". This perspective highlights the integral role of language in shaping our interactions and understanding of the world¹.

Speaking is one of the most important skills to master in learning English, as it enables us to engage effectively in conversations and express ourselves clearly. Proficiency in speaking enables us to interact confidently with native speakers, participate in discussions and convey our thoughts and

¹ Chomsky Noam, *Aspects of the theory of syntax*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965) h.20

ideas in a variety of contexts. It also enhances our ability to understand and respond to others, making it easier to build relationships, both personally. Mastering speaking not only improves our fluency but also boosts our overall communication skills, leading to greater success in using English in real-world situations². Click or tap here to enter text.

According to experts such as Nunan, Speaking skills in English are crucial for achieving fluency and confidence in communication. Mastering speaking involves not only correct pronunciation and grammar but also the ability to use language appropriately in context, adapt to various conversational styles, and engage in meaningful exchanges. As emphasized by Nunan and Harmer, the ability to articulate thoughts clearly and respond appropriately in different situations significantly impacts overall language proficiency. By focusing on developing these skills, learners can enhance their ability to participate in discussions, present persuasive arguments, and build positive relationships with others, thereby improving their effectiveness in both personal and professional interactions³.

The purpose of speaking exercises in the English language is to encourage students to use the language to talk about their personal experiences, as well as to communicate with people from other countries.

² Sudarmo, S. (2021). *The importance of speaking in English as a foreign language between skillful and thoughtful competencies: studying sociolinguistics perspectives*. *Linguistics and Culture Review*, 5(S1), 113-124. <https://doi.org/10.37028/lingcure.v5nS1.1321>

³ Nunan, David, *Practical English Language Teaching*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), p55
Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, (Harlow England: Pearson Logman, 2007), p123

However, most students experience nervousness when presented with this challenge⁴. According to Saville-Troike, students may struggle with psychological challenges like worry, dread, and lack of confidence. These challenges also pose a significant barrier to student ability to practice speaking⁵.

In theory, speaking is considered one of the most complex and essential skills in language learning. It involves not only linguistic competence but also the ability to apply language knowledge in real-time communication. Amanda Sela Nathania Marbun states some of the speaking issues that students encounter include a lack of vocabulary, an inability to communicate effectively, a lack of language, a lack of practice, an inadequate learning environment, and other outside influences. One major issue is a lack of practice and a lack of confidence to practice⁶. As of right now, we frequently hear about English teachers' dissatisfaction when their students receive bad final test scores. Given the significance of speaking ability, the teacher needs to enhance speaking skill instruction.

Many scholars, such as Ur, argue that students often face difficulties in speaking because of several factors, including inhibition, low confidence, fear of making mistakes, and lack of motivation. Furthermore, speaking requires learners to process information in real time, which can be

⁴ Najiha Najiha, "An Analysis of Students' Speaking Anxiety in English Classroom at SMAN 2 Siak Hulu," *Lectura: Jurnal Pendidikan* 12, no. 2 (August 2021): 218–229

⁵ Muriel Saville-Troike, *Introducing Second Language Acquisition, Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511808838.002>.

⁶ "Mrizal1,+31.+27282-Article+Text-89229-1-4-20240409," n.d.

intimidating without sufficient practice and supportive learning environments⁷. To address these issues, communicative language teaching (CLT) emphasizes the importance of using interactive techniques that promote meaningful use of language. One such technique is Small Group Discussion (SGD), which allows students to practice speaking in a low-pressure, collaborative setting. According to Richards and Rodgers, group work increases student talking time, reduces anxiety, and fosters peer support, making it an effective strategy for developing speaking skills in EFL contexts. Therefore, the use of small group discussion aligns with theoretical perspectives on language learning and offers a promising method to enhance students' oral communication abilities⁸.

In light of these findings, educators are encouraged to adopt varied instructional methods to make speaking activities more engaging and motivating for students. One such method is small group interaction. Small group discussions (SGD) are a collaborative learning strategy where students engage in focused conversation within small groups of 3 to 6 people. This technique promotes a deeper comprehension of curriculum through peer interaction, allowing students to exchange different points of view, constructively question one another's ideas, and solve problems together⁹. Small group discussions encourage active involvement, which

⁷ Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁹ Andrea Martina Elizondo and Del Mar College, "Switching Gears : *Understanding*

helps students develop important communication skills, build critical thinking, and support analytical reasoning. Furthermore, these methods allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situation, bridging the gap between abstract notions and real-world applications.

Small group discussions contribute not only to academic advancement but also to the development of students' social and emotional skills. Through collaborative dialogue, students gain the ability to approach various perspectives with empathy, strengthen their skills in negotiation and conflict resolution, and build relationships founded on mutual respect and trust. These exchanges not only enhance group solidarity but also equip students for real-life scenarios that demand effective teamwork and collaboration¹⁰.

Several studies have examined the use of small group discussion (SGD) techniques to enhance students' speaking skills. For instance, research by Sari and Ahmad demonstrated that SGD significantly improves learners' confidence, fluency, and active participation in classroom speaking activities¹¹. Similarly, Putra and Lestari (2020) found that students engaged in small group discussions showed better comprehension and vocabulary

Small Group Discussions,” no. November (2021).

¹⁰ Nerea Martinez-Yarza, Josu Solabarrieta-Eizaguirre, and Rosa Santibáñez-Gruber, *The Impact of Family Involvement on Students' Social-Emotional Development: The Mediation Role of School Engagement*, *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, vol. 39 (Springer Netherlands, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-024-00862-1>.

¹¹ R. Ahmad, *The Impact of Small Group Discussion on Students' Speaking Performance in EFL Classroom*, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 13, no. 2 (2022): 178–186, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1302.04>.

Mita D. Sari, *"Improving Students' Speaking Skill through Small Group Discussion,"* *Journal of English Education and Teaching* 5, no. 3 (2021): 298–309, <https://doi.org/10.33369/jeet.5.3.298-309>.

usage compared to those taught through traditional methods¹². However, most of these studies were conducted in general English learning contexts or focused on descriptive and procedural texts. Few studies have specifically investigated the effectiveness of SGD in improving students' speaking skills in narrative texts, particularly at the senior high school level. This creates a research gap in understanding how SGD supports the development of spoken narrative structures, which require not only fluency but also the ability to sequence events coherently. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by exploring how the small group discussion technique affects the speaking performance of tenth-grade students when delivering narrative texts.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher is interested in investigating "The Effectiveness of Small Group Discussions Technique on speaking skills in narrative texts of the tenth grade students at MAN 3 Tulungagung".

B. Research Question

Based on the background description, the research problem is formulated as follows:

1. How is the students' speaking skills before and after being taught by using the small group discussions technique in narrative texts?

¹² A. Y. Putra and I. Lestari, *Enhancing Students' Speaking Ability through Small Group Discussions*, *English Education Journal* 11, no. 1 (2020): 50–61, <https://ejournal.unsri.ac.id/index.php/engedu/article/view/12345>.

C. Objective of the Research

Based on the background description, the objective of the research is formulated as follows:

1. To know whether there is any significance difference in students' speaking skills before and after being taught by using the small group discussions technique in narrative texts.

D. Purpose of the Study

Based on the research problem, the primary objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the small group discussions technique on the speaking skills of the tenth grade students in narrative texts at MAN 3 Tullungagung.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of this research is predicted to be providing out theoretical and practical significance:

1. Theoretical

To improve knowledge related to speaking skills, particularly by learning small group discussions technique.

2. Practical

- a. For English Teacher

To provide valuable perception and guidance for English teachers in apply the small group discussion technique to enhance students' speaking skills.

b. For Students

To help students in developing their speaking skills through the implementation of the small group discussion technique.

c. For Further Researchers

The findings of this study can give us a useful resource and reliable reference for other researchers conducting similar studies.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

Based on the research background outlined above:

1. The scope: This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the Small Group Discussion technique in enhancing speaking skills during the learning of narrative texts among tenth grade students at MAN 3 Tulungagung. The researcher used a pre-experimental design one group pre-test post-test
2. The limitation: Since the researcher uses a pre-experimental design, the focus is on assessing the improvement in speaking skills through the implementation of small group discussions techniques with a specific in the context of narrative text.

G. Variable Definition

1. Conceptual Definition

a. Small group discussion

Conceptually, Small Group Discussion is a collaborative learning

strategy involving a small group of students (typically 3–6 individuals) who discuss a particular topic together with the aim of improving understanding and communication skills

b. Speaking skills

Conceptually, speaking skills refer to an individual's ability to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings orally in a language that is understandable to the listener.

2. Operational Definition

a. Small group discussion

In this study, Small Group Discussion is operationally defined as a speaking activity conducted in small groups (3–5 students per group), in which students are asked to discuss and retell a narrative story based on a picture provided by the researcher.

b. Speaking skills

Speaking skills were measured based on five aspects: Grammar accuracy in the use of language structures, Vocabulary range and appropriateness of word choice, Comprehension understanding of the story content and the interlocutor, Fluency smoothness of speech with minimal hesitation, Pronunciation clarity in the articulation of words. Students' speaking ability was assessed through a pre-test and post-test in the form of an oral task, where students were asked to spontaneously retell the content of a selected narrative picture for approximately 2 minutes. The assessment was carried out by the researcher using a

speaking rubric.

H. Systematic Writing Structure

This final project is organized into several main chapters to guide readers in understanding the research. Chapter I includes the introduction, which covers the background, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and writing structure. Chapter II presents the literature review, outlining relevant theories, previous studies and theoretical framework. Chapter III describes the research methodology, including the approach, subjects, instruments, data collection, and analysis techniques. Chapter IV include research findings. Chapter V include discussion. Finally, Chapter VI provides conclusions and suggestions based on the study results.