

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher provide an explanation of the background of the research, identification of the problem, delimitation of the research, research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the research, and the organization of the chapters.

Background of the Research

Learning speaking skills is very necessary because speaking is a way that is often used to communicate with other people. In language learning, speaking skills are very important to student in understanding and accepting the material presented. In any field such as education, business, health, and others speaking skills is very important. According to Marriam et. al (2016) the student must rely on memorized survival phrases to address the most pressing needs in real communication settings.

For English students, having good speaking skills is a dream and a goal that needs to be achieved. There are so many things that students can do to improve their speaking skills for example, role-play activities carried out in class, storytelling, introducing themselves, and many other activities. Among these, small group discussions are particularly beneficial, providing opportunities for interaction, problem solving, and sharing ideas also focuses on the benefits and challenges students face in small group discussions to improve their speaking skills, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency. According to Yudar et al., (2020) one thing that needs special attention is active and correct pronunciation so that students can communicate well. By learning a lot of pronunciation, students will easily understand

native conversations, making it easier for them to communicate. The difficulty faced by EFL students today is in the grammar of sentences when pronouncing.

According to Sari and Lestari (2019), there are many ways that can be done to learn and improve speaking skills for students. Examples of methods include increasing vocabulary, reading aloud, doing role plays, watching English films, and communicating using English. Of the several methods that have been mentioned, one that is often used in the classroom is communicating and discussing. Fibrina and Ngadiso (2012) mentioned in their study that students communicate to find solutions, share opinions, or identify problems. Small group discussions provide opportunities for students to interact with their group mates. This method can stimulate students to be active participants in the discussions provided. The existence of small group discussions can provide several benefits, such as created a more developed learning atmosphere, opportunities for students to express their opinions better, interaction between students, and providing student experience in discussion and deliberation. The discussion in class must also be under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher is responsible for providing direction and assisting students in doing the discussion in order to create a productive discussion. The existence of small group discussions is very important in learning because the method has an effect on the formation of student character, the effectiveness of the material presented, and the sustainability of learning.

One of the benefits of using small group discussions is supporting students' speaking skills. According to Puspitasari et al. (2023) using the small group discussion method really allows students to improve their speaking and

communication skills. One of the important factors when conducting a small group discussion is that students understand the topic being discussed so that they can provide their ideas and opinions in the discussion forum. According to La'biran (2017) using a teaching strategy with small group discussions provides benefits for students, namely making it easier for students to talk and express their opinions. During class discussions, students are given the opportunity to express their opinions to a group of friends so they can start practicing speaking.

In participating in small group discussions, sometimes students have difficulty in participating. This research discussed what students' challenges towards small group discussions are to support their speaking skills. For students, learning to speak might be one of the most difficult things to do, especially for those who don't have an English-speaking background or don't use English as their first language. One of the problems in speaking English for students is the lack of confidence in brands (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). Besides that, there are several reasons students find it difficult to speak English in class. In addition to low self-confidence, students also have problems such as a lack of vocabulary, a lack of partners to speak English with, and a lack of motivation to study. As Rahmat and Jon (2023) mention, there are several difficulties that arise in group discussions, namely individual learning preferences, vocabulary and pronunciation problems, as well as a lack of self-confidence from students.

Based on the researcher observation there are many courses in English Language Education Department (ELED) in Privat University in Yogyakarta that use small group discussions as a learning method in class. In discussion, the students

communicate with group members to solve problems or convey ideas so that all group members use their speaking skills to be able to participate in the group. When participating in discussions, there are several challenges faced by group members. One of which is the lack of ability of members to speak English in discussion forums, so there is a lack of active participation from members. This phenomenon was one of the reasons the researcher chose this problem as a research topic. This topic was raised to find out what the benefits and challenges are for students in small group discussions to support their speaking skills. The thing that is of concern to this research is that the researcher find out about the benefits of small group discussions to support students' speaking skills in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency in speaking English.

Identification of the Problems

Speaking skills are important in discussions considering that during discussions students need to talk and discuss with other members. In discussions, students will share their opinions and ideas with their group and students speak using language that can be understood by group members. The use of group discussions can improve students' speaking skills because it trains communication so that it can influence the effectiveness of the discussion and the results obtained. In an EFL context, small group discussions offer several benefits, including improved communication and pronunciation skills. However, the success of this method depends on supporting factors such as students' motivation, learning styles, and teaching methods.

In addition, the challenges also appear in the use of small group discussions for both teachers and students. Difficulty in participating during discussions might be hampering the smooth running of the discussion, resulting in less than optimal results. This research explored the benefits and challenges students face in small group discussions to support their speaking skills. The benefits obtained an influence on their ability to speak English and also the challenges faced by the students during the small group discussion.

Delimitation of the Research

The researcher limits the topics only discussed the benefits and challenges experienced by students who join small group discussions in class to support their speaking skills. There are several aspects that focused on regarding the ability to speak English that are pronunciation ability, vocabulary, and fluency. The researcher also focused on what the challenges students faced in participating in small group discussions that influence them in supporting their English speaking skills. For the participants, the researcher only taken the students in ELED batch 2021.

Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the problems of this research as follows:

1. What are the benefits of small group discussion in supporting students' speaking skills?
2. What are the students' challenges of small group discussion in supporting their speaking skills?

Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the objective of this research are:

1. To find out the benefits of small group discussion in supporting students' speaking skills.
2. To explore the students' challenges of small group discussion in supporting their speaking skills.

Significance of the Research

The goal of the research is to assist are the teacher, the learners, and the other researchers.

For the teachers. This research can be used as a guide or reference to teach students in class related to small group discussions. Teachers can also find out about what are the benefits and challenges in joining small group discussion so they can use the result as a consideration to apply or not the small group discussion as a teaching method in class and to anticipate the challenges that the students might have during the small group discussion and inform their teaching strategies.

For the students. This research can help students to gain the knowledge about the importance of small group discussion in classroom learning activities. Students can find out the benefits and challenges of joining small group discussion on their speaking skill so they can prepare themselves to join the small group discussion and it is hoped that students can increase their activeness when participating in small group discussions and anticipate the challenges that they faced.

For the other researchers. This research helps future researchers as a reference to find examples of topics, data, and ideas for their research. They can also use this research as a reference for similar research.

Organization of the Chapters

This research consisted of five chapters. The first chapter is background explains about the reason why the researcher is interested with the topic about student's perceptions on small group discussion on supporting their speaking skills. Chapter one also provides the research questions, the objectives of the research, delimitation of the research, significance of the research, and organization of the research.

Chapter two is literature review. Literature review discussed about the theories related to the topic. The theories include about small group discussion, speaking skill, the benefits, and challenges of using small group discussion on improving student's speaking skill, review of related study, also the conceptual framework.

Chapter three focused on the methodology that used in this research. The methodology consists about research design, research setting, research participants, research instruments, data collection method, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

Chapter four provide the results and discussion. This chapter shows about the results of the research and provide the discussion.

Chapter five provides the conclusion and recommendation. The conclusion presents the summary of the research. It presents the results of the research which answering the research questions. This chapter also offers some recommendations