

Applying small group discussion to improve the ability to convey opinions orally on recount text material

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Abstract

The ability to use a language to convey ideas, feelings and thoughts orally is called speaking. This shows that speaking skills are crucial to learn, including for students at school. In this way, teachers are expected to be more innovative in finding learning methods or models that can improve students' speaking skills. The small group discussion learning model is considered to be the right treatment because it can increase students' confidence in speaking, increase interaction between students, and students become more active in contributing to learning. The aim of carrying out this research is to find out how the application of the Small Group Discussion learning model to students affects their speaking skills, especially in conveying opinions orally in English. This research used a quantitative approach with experimental research method. This research was carried out at MA Plus Darul Hufadz Jatinangor. Participants in this research were students from classes X-A and X-B, each class consisting of 20 students. Data was collected using tests in the form of presentations from students. The results show that implementing the Small Group Discussion can have a significant influence on students' ability to convey opinions orally using English. This is proven by the average (mean) score of the experimental class learning results reaching 74,20, while the mean score of the control class only reached 65,00. It can be concluded, that the Small Group Discussion can have a positive impact on the learning process and student learning outcomes, especially in language skills. By implementing Small Group Discussion, students are seen interacting with each other more often, they show a positive response to the application of this learning model in their learning activities.

Keywords: *Small group discussion; speaking skills; recount text*

INTRODUCTION

In implementing an education system, language is one aspect that has an crucial role to be taught to students. The reason is because language is

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considered a very effective medium to convey thoughts, opinions, and feelings to others and allows communication between humans. (Ashrafuzzaman et al., 2021) added that language is an essential component of human existence. Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20/2003 states that language education must be included in the primary education curriculum as well as secondary education in Indonesia. The Minister of Education and Culture (2013) also emphasized the necessity of learning English in schools (Sahiruddin, 2013). According to the 2013 Curriculum, the objective of English education is to enable students to effectively use the language in both oral and written communication. These statements underscore the importance of English language education as a mandatory subject in Indonesian schools. Moreover, in this era of globalization, every individual is required to be able to compete in order to have reliable human resources. Seeing the role of English, which is very necessary, English proficiency should be an individual investment in Indonesia so that a prosperous life can be achieved (Mika & Mardiana, 2023). Maduwu (2016) added that English can make Indonesia better known in the international world because the potential of this country can be communicated well using this international language.

Tarigan (2013) identifies four essential language skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Among these, speaking skills are often considered the most critical, as they are a key indicator of language fluency. Speaking skills are vital for communication, enabling individuals to articulate their thoughts, provide information, and express emotions and ideas. Furthermore, Mubarok et al. (2024) added that public speaking can improve self-efficacy, leadership skills, knowledge of how to influence others, and better social relationships. Brown (2004) defines speaking as the ability to produce language that can be empirically observed and assessed. The effectiveness and accuracy of this skill are often influenced by the listener's ability to comprehend, which can impact the validity and reliability of oral proficiency tests.

Speaking skills remain a significant challenge for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in school. Students frequently encounter various obstacles in acquiring these skills. Amiruddin (2022), identifies several factors that hinder the development of speaking skills among EFL students, such as the application of inappropriate teaching methods, differences in grammar and phonology, anxiety, and lack of motivation. Susanti et al. (2021) further note that students in the classroom often hesitate to practice speaking due to fears of ridicule, low motivation, grammatical errors, and limited vocabulary. Putra et al. (2022) revealed that the main factor inhibiting speaking ability is the psychological condition of students. Additionally, Muslim et al. (2022) identified that the small amount of practice that students acquire can have a significant impact on their English language education.

Based on observations conducted at MA Plus Darul Hufadz Jatinangor, the researcher identified several factors inhibiting students' progress in learning

speaking skills. Common issues include students' lack of confidence in speaking in front of the class, limited vocabulary, and insufficient proficiency in grammar and pronunciation. Consequently, it is crucial for educators to organize English language instruction effectively, with a focus on improving students' speaking skills. Teachers can serve as the main resource for supporting students in achieving their goals (John, 2020). Ahmed (2018) added that students followed what their teachers instructed and diligently completed the tasks given to them. Under such circumstances, teachers need to be more careful in both teaching methods and pronunciation of words. If there are errors in pronunciation, students may consistently use inappropriate pronunciation.

In fact, the question of whether language abilities are innate or learned is controversial. The theory of Universal Grammar suggest that every human has innate linguistics abilities that enable them to learn to speak (Krauss, 2024). Additionally, in the theory of Multiple Intelligences, put forward by Gardner, he differentiates seven types of intelligence, and one of them is linguistic or verbal intelligence. Linguistic or verbal intelligence is the ability a person has to use words in language. This theory believes that humans do not only have one intelligence, but every human being must have seven types of intelligence. In this way, every human being actually has verbal abilities, therefore, speaking abilities can be improved if they continue to be honed, including students at school.

Most people assume that language is a complex and multifaceted system used for communication. It consists of symbols (such as words) and rules (such as grammar) that enable humans to convey thoughts, ideas, emotions, and information. There is something more we can learn from language if we look beyond the language of creativity and into the phenomenon of language itself (Demuth & Glăveanu, 2023). The phenomenon of English teaching method is still debatable by scholars. The reality that the primary function of English teaching is not teaching a language but rather teaching a subject through the use of a language—English. This provides its own set of challenges, mainly for Indonesian teachers. Hopefully, they can find the correct method and approach of English teaching in the class. Significantly, hence this research tries finding the teachers' creativity to communicate the message orally through recount texts. Teacher creativity in education is the necessary stimulus to motivate and develop students' learning (Irawan, 2022).

Small group discussion learning model

There are several approaches, methods and learning models that can be applied to learning speaking skills. One of them is the Small Group Discussion learning model. Fauzi (2017) posits that small groups can facilitate encouragement, clarification, and guidance for participatory learning, enabling students to actively engage in classroom activities. Throughout the learning process, the teacher provides assistance and guidance to each group. Apart from that, according to Cahyadi et.al., (2022, as cited in Gaffar et.al., 2023) suggest that

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social interaction activities and regular speaking practice can help students become more confident and comfortable, fostering a conducive learning environment. Susanti et.al. (2021) assert that the Small Group Discussion model offers numerous benefits, such as providing ample opportunities for students to speak and express themselves, and increasing students' participation in active learning. Based on Vygotsky's theory (1978), the strongest factor in increasing understanding is interacting with each other using language. Devira (2020) added that the main factor in building English active teaching-learning practices is the teacher's understanding of the holistic concept of active learning pedagogy.

Hence, to overcome various problems regarding learning speaking skills discovered by the researcher, the researcher applied a small group discussion learning model using recount text as learning material in this research. By implementing this learning model, researchers hope that students will succeed in improving the quality of learning and their abilities in the speaking aspect. The discussion of recount text material was considered more engaging and effective for developing students' abilities to articulate their opinions about past events. According to Putri & Hamzah (2023), in implementing the small group discussion learning model, students feel more involved in learning activities and are more prepared to carry out the tasks given.

Brewer (1997) stated that there are several procedural steps in implementing the Small Group Discussion learning model, including: 1) Introduction, at this stage, the teacher must prepare various aspects that will be used as discussion topics with students. The teacher must first introduce the background knowledge of the topic to be discussed to students. The teachers must also help students understand how a Small Group Discussion works. In the introduction, the reason why the chosen topic is to be discussed should also be given by the teacher; 2) Directing the discussion, in this stage, the teacher must direct students to start their own discussions. The teachers got to give the students a chance if there are questions that students want to ask the teacher. The teacher can also provide various kinds of stimuli so that students' thinking about the topics being discussed can be stimulated. Then, if there are students whose discussion has started to stray from the chosen topic, then the teacher should direct the students back to discussing the topic they should be discussing; 3) Summarizing the discussion, at this stage, teachers are required to make a summary or conclusion to ensure students understand what has been discussed. This is done so that there are no errors in students' understanding of the topic. Making a summary also makes it easier for students to remember important points about the material discussed.

Recount text material in learning

Recount text is a type of text that contains information about events in the past. Khairunnisaak et al. (2022) added that a recount text is a text that

discusses past events in chronological order, such as a diary, to inform or entertain the reader. The generic structure of recount text comprises three main components: orientation, events and reorientation. The orientation section provides essential details about the characters, the location of the incident, and the time when the incident occurred. The events section elaborates on the main content of the text, recounting the experiences or events that the writer wishes to convey to the reader. The reorientation section offers a conclusion, summary, or restatement of the information presented in the orientation. Masithoh (2017, as cited in Gaffar, et.al, 2024) stated that recount texts can be categorized into several types, including personal, factual, biographical, and historical recount. The historical recount, which serves as the focus of this research, aims to inform readers about significant events from the past that hold historical significance (Gaffar, et.al, 2024).

Several previous studies were conducted on the same topic. Crisianita et al. (2022) showed that the Small Group Discussion learning model is successful in making students respond positively and can improve students' speaking skills; and Susanti et al. (2021) demonstrated an increase in students' mean scores after implementing a Small Group Discussion learning model using Class Action Research. Those studies are designed with strong focus on the general aspect of speaking. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine how Small Group Discussion affect the development of speaking skills, the focus of which was specifically focused on the aspect of conveying opinions, and was conducted by using a discussion of recount text as learning material. This is done by referring to some of the learning outcomes of Phase E (grade X of high school) compiled by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the "Kurikulum Merdeka", that is, the types of texts such as narrative, descriptive, procedure, exposition, recount, report, and authentic texts are the main references in learning English at this phase. Students use English to convey their opinions or feelings and discuss topics related to their daily lives or hot issues, depending on the age of the students in this phase. Therefore, this study can be used to help teachers realize students' achievements in terms of their ability to express opinions or ideas during learning, especially in English subjects.

METHOD

Design and participants

In this research, the researcher used a research approach with quantitative method. Sugiyono (2013) states that this research approach is used to study certain populations or samples and use instruments to collect data in the field. Data analysis in this quantitative research was carried out using statistical calculations which aimed to test hypothesis proposed by the researcher. This research also uses research methods in a quantitative approach, the research method used in this research is an experimental research method. According to Creswell (2014), in experimental activities, it will test an procedure, idea, or practice to see whether the idea has an influence on an outcome or dependent

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variable. In this way, Sugiyono (2013) states that experimental research methods can be interpreted as research methods that aim to determine the effect of a particular treatment on another thing under controlled conditions. In this research, the researcher used subjects from MA Plus Darul Hufadz students in classes X-A and X-B. Students in class X-A were used as the experimental group, while students in class X-B were used as the control group. Each class consists of 20 students. Class X-A consists of 4 male students and 16 female students. Meanwhile, class X-B consists of 5 male students and 15 female students. Both classes are given the same learning material but use different learning methods or models. The research design is in accordance with the type of nonequivalent control group design (Sugiyono, 2013). This can be illustrated as follows:

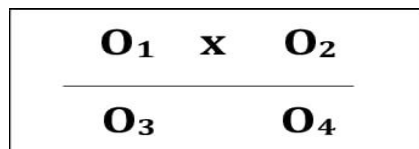


Figure 1. Nonequivalent Control Group Design (Sugiyono, 2013)

Instrument

The present researchers chose tests as instruments for this research. Instruments are used as a medium to collect data from participants in the research field. In this study, there were two assignments or tests. The researchers, who act as teachers, will give pre-test and post-test assignments to students in each class, namely control class and experimental class. The test given is in the form of an oral presentation. Before applying it to participants, the researcher first tested the validity and reliability of the instrument. According to Sugiyono (2013), an instrument can be said to be valid if it can measure what it is supposed to measure. And an instrument can be said to be reliable if it can produce the same data when used to measure the same object several times. The instrument also used *Cronbach's alpha* calculation to check if it was reliable. The researcher tested the validity and reliability of the instrument using the SPSS version 25 statistical application.

Procedures

To collect data from students' scores based on oral tests, the researcher carried out several stages, as follows:

Table 1. Stages of Data Collection in the Experimental Class

No.	Description
1.	Students were asked to write about what they know about recount text and prepare their own opinions regarding the benefits of studying the material. The teacher allowed students to find out through books or the internet.
2.	Students were asked to make a video of themselves presenting a presentation related to the information they had obtained, along with their respective opinions, as a form of pre-test.
3.	The teacher explained to the students regarding the recount text material.
4.	Students in the class were divided into five groups, each consisting of four students.
5.	The teacher gave random topic to create a recount text.
6.	Each group created a recount text based on the topic that had been determined for their group, and students were required to include their opinions regarding the events they wrote. The teacher also guided the discussion activities of each group.
7.	Students were asked to present the results of their recount text orally as a form of post-test.

Table 2. Stages of Data Collection in the Control Class

No.	Description
1.	Students were asked to write about what they know about recount text and prepare their own opinions regarding the benefits of studying the material. The teacher allowed students to find out through books or the internet.
2.	Students were asked to make a video of themselves presenting a presentation related to the information they had obtained, along with their respective opinions, as a form of pre-test.
3.	The teacher explained to the students regarding the recount text material.
4.	Students were asked to create a recount text along with each student's opinion regarding the events in the recount text they wrote. The teacher guides students in their learning.
5.	Students present the results of the recount text and convey their opinions regarding the events in the text orally as a form of post-test.

Assessment rubric of the test

Harmer (2007) states that there are several elements that must be considered, including: 1) Pronunciation: in pronunciation, students focus on sounds and show where words can form in the mouth. Apart from that, students can know where the emphasis should be placed on the words so that the words can be understood and heard clearly; 2) Grammar: grammar knowledge is very important for learning. Grammar is a linguistic rule that regulates the criteria for the use of each word and sentence; 3) Vocabulary: vocabulary is the basic component of language. It contains single words, phrases, idioms, etc. Mastery of vocabulary is very important because students can place words correctly into sentences; 4) Fluency: fluency is the ability to speak spontaneously without pauses or hesitation. This fluency also focuses on correcting the placement of stops and pauses when speaking; 5) Comprehension: comprehension is the

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ability to understand something. Comprehension is an important factor that must be considered because, when we speak, we need to convey a message or information. With good comprehension, the speaker will produce speech that is straightforward, clear, and acceptable to the person he is speaking to.

Based on the statement from Harmer (2007) above, the researcher pays attention to 5 things that are the basis for assessing students: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. This aims to enable the researcher to provide a more optimal assessment regarding students' ability to express opinions orally using English. That way, researchers use an assessment rubric that includes these five things, as below:

Tabel 3. Assessment Rubric

No.	Criteria	Score	Description
1.	Pronunciation	5	Has a slight foreign accent.
		4	It is always understandable even if still use a certain accent.
		3	Pronunciation problems require concentrated listening and sometimes create misunderstanding.
		2	Very difficult to understand due to pronunciation problems, most often asked to repeat.
		1	Pronunciation problems make speech almost unintelligible.
2.	Grammar	5	Makes only a few obvious grammatical and word order errors if any.
		4	Occasionally making grammatical and/or word order errors that are not permitted, without obscuring the meaning.
		3	Often makes grammatical and word order errors, which sometimes obscure meaning.
		2	Grammatical sequences rearrange sentences to change the meaning.
		1	Grammar and word order errors are so severe that they make speech almost unintelligible.
3.	Vocabulary	5	Use vocabulary and idioms like native speakers.
		4	Sometimes using inappropriate terms and having to rephrase ideas for lexical and equivalency reasons.
		3	Often uses the wrong words and is somewhat limited in conversation due to inadequate vocabulary.
		2	The misuse of words and very limited vocabulary makes it quite difficult to understand.
		1	Such extreme limited vocabulary makes conversation almost impossible.
4.	Fluency	5	Speaks fluently and takes less effort almost like a native speaker.
		4	The speed of speech seems to be little bit affected by language problems.
		3	Speed and fluency are greatly influenced by language issues.

		2	Usually indecisive, often forced to remain silent by language barriers.
		1	Speech is also halting and intermittent making conversation almost impossible.
5.	Comprehension	5	Seems to understand everything that is said without difficulty.
		4	Understands almost everything at normal pace, although repetition may sometimes be necessary.
		3	Understand most of what is said at slower speed but without repetition.
		2	Has great difficulty in understanding what is said, can only do so slowly and with frequent repetition.
		1	It cannot be said to understand even simple English speech.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the researcher teaches students in the classroom and focuses on implementing the Small Group Discussion learning model in order to find out the effect of this learning model on students' speaking abilities. In the experimental class, researchers implement the Small Group Discussion learning model when teaching recount text to students. Meanwhile, in the control class, researchers teach recount text material using conventional teaching methods. Researchers also focus on students' ability to express opinions before learning and after learning, therefore the researcher used pre-test and post-test to obtain data from students. The following are the results of the analysis of pre-test and post-test scores that have been collected from student presentations in conveying their opinions orally:

Table 4. Score of Pre-test and Post-test in Experimental Class

No.	Students	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	S1	48	68
2.	S2	76	80
3.	S3	68	80
4.	S4	52	64
5.	S5	48	60
6.	S6	60	80
7.	S7	76	84
8.	S8	56	72
9.	S9	52	68
10.	S10	60	76
11.	S11	72	80
12.	S12	68	76
13.	S13	52	64
14.	S14	60	72
15.	S15	76	88
16.	S16	56	72
17.	S17	60	76
18.	S18	68	80
19.	S19	52	64

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20.	S20	68	80
	Min score	48	60
	Max score	76	88
	Mean	61,40	74,20

From the data above, the mean score of the pre-test is 61,40, while the mean score of the post-test is 74,20. It can be seen that the experimental class' score was 12,8. After applying the small group discussion learning model as a treatment to teach speaking classes about conveying opinions, the score increased. This indicates that students' scores from the pre-test to the post-test experienced a significant difference.

Table 5. Score of Pre-test and Post-test in Control Class

No.	Students	Pre-test	Post-test
1.	S1	72	72
2.	S2	56	56
3.	S3	52	52
4.	S4	44	48
5.	S5	68	72
6.	S6	60	64
7.	S7	76	80
8.	S8	72	76
9.	S9	56	64
10.	S10	64	68
11.	S11	68	64
12.	S12	80	80
13.	S13	60	56
14.	S14	64	64
15.	S15	64	68
16.	S16	72	76
17.	S17	80	80
18.	S18	60	64
19.	S19	52	52
20.	S20	44	44
	Min score	44	44
	Max score	80	80
	Mean	63,20	65,00

From the data above, the mean score of the pre-test is 63,20, while the mean score of the post-test is 65,00. It can be seen that the control class' score was 1,8. These results indicate that the students' scores in the control class have increased; however, the scores obtained by the experimental class remain higher, which means that the increase in student learning achievement is higher in the experimental class.

Statistical analysis of research data results

Normality Test

The normality test is carried out as a prerequisite for calculating the t-test; the aim is to ensure that the data from both classes are normally distributed. The normality test in this study was taken from the Shapiro-Wilk results because the participants used in this study were <50 students.

Table 6. Normality Test Of Pre-test and Post-test between Experimental and Control Classes

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test Experimental class	,159	20	,200	,914	20	,076
Post-test Experimental class	,177	20	,102	,945	20	,299
Pre-test Control class	,097	20	,200	,963	20	,614
Post-test Control class	,164	20	,168	,944	20	,285

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the table above, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk calculation show that the significance value of the pre-test of the experimental class is 0,076, the sig value of the post-test of the experimental class is 0,299, the sig value of the pre-test of the control class is 0,614, and the sig value of the post-test of the control class is 0,285. Based on the rules for reading the results of the normality test, if the Sig value is > 0.05, then the data is certainly normally distributed. From the data above, it is indicated that all pre-test and post-test data from the experimental and control classes are normally distributed.

Homogeneity Test

The homogeneity test is carried out as one of the prerequisites for calculating the t-test. This test aims to ensure that the data is homogeneous. The homogeneity test in this study uses Levene statistical with the rules for reading the results of the homogeneity test, where if the Sig value is >0,05, then the data is declared homogeneous.

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Table 7. Homogeneity Test of Pre-test and Post-test between Experimental and Control Classes

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
2,038	1	38	,162

Based on the table above, the Sig value of the data homogeneity test in this study is 0,162. This indicates that the data obtained from this study is homogeneous.

Hypothesis Testing (T-test)

After the field research ended, the researcher carried out a series of data analyzes from the results of the assignments that had been carried out in the experimental class and control class. The data that had been collected in the form of learning outcomes from the two classes was analyzed using the SPSS version 25 computer program by using T-test. The T-test is carried out to test whether a hypothesis is proven true or vice versa. From the T-test calculation in the SPSS, it produces the Sig (2-tailed) value of this research data is 0,004. Meanwhile, according to Ghozali (2016), the statistical T-test criteria is that it can be said that there is no influence from the application of the independent variable to the dependent variable if the Sig (2-tailed) value is >0,05, and vice versa if the Sig (2-tailed) value is <0,05. Therefore, based on the T-test results of this research, it can be concluded that implementing the Small Group Discussion learning model can have an influence on students' speaking abilities, especially when they convey their opinions orally using English. The T-test calculation results are as presented in the table below:

Tabel 8. T-test Calculation Results

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	2,416	,128	3,24 2	38	,002	9,600	2,962	3,605	15,595
	Equal variances not assumed			3,24 2	33,61 8	,003	9,600	2,962	3,579	15,621

In the t-test conducted, there are calculation results that show the mean score of each post-test result from the two classes that were used as participants in this study, as shown in the table below:

Table 9. Average Score (*mean*) of Learning Output
Group Statistics

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest	Experimental (SGDM)	20	74,20	7,620	1,704
	Control (Conventional)	20	65,00	10,926	2,443

The table above shows that the data on student learning outcomes in the experimental class has a mean score of 74,20, meanwhile, for students in the control class, they had a mean score for their learning outcomes of 65,00. The data calculations' outcomes demonstrate that the control group's average score was lower than the experimental group's, it implies that using this small group discussion learning model can have a positive influence on students learning output.

This shows that it is very crucial for teachers to be able to consider what learning methods, models or techniques that will be applied when teaching in order to achieve predetermined learning outcomes. Learning methods are one of the things that have a significant role in achieving educational success, including achieving the predetermined learning objectives (Khoerunnisa et al., 2022). Similarly, when conducting this research, the researcher tried to use a learning model, namely small group discussion, then applied it to the discussion of recount text material with the aim of finding out whether it had an effect on students' ability to convey opinions in English or vice versa. From this research, the researcher can find out that the small group discussion learning model has succeeded in having a positive influence on learning outcomes, especially regarding students' ability to express opinions verbally. As with the research conducted by Gaffar, et.al, (2024), this research both uses recount text as learning material, only the focus of learning outcomes is on reading skills and the technique used is mind mapping. The results of this research show that the application of these techniques in learning to students' reading skills in recount text material also succeeded in having positive influence on students' learning outcomes. So, this is evidence that teachers need to be aware to what learning methods, models or techniques will be applied, which are appropriate to the learning outcomes to be achieve.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that this study was conducted to find out whether the use of small group discussions in learning affects students' speaking skills, especially their skills in conveying their opinions in English. The results of the data that has been collected indicate that students in the class where Small Group Discussion were conducted had a higher average post-test score than students in the control class where such treatment was not applied, where the experimental class's mean score was 74,20, whereas the control class's mean score only reached 65,00. Apart from that, students in the experiment class

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seemed more motivated to learn and they also communicated more actively with each other. By conducting Small Group Discussion, students interact with each other more frequently and respond more positively to the application of this learning model in their learning activities. This shows that implementation of Small Group Discussion has a very positive impact on students' learning, especially on the improvement of their speaking skills in expressing their opinions in English.

With the implementation of this study, teachers may consider using the small group discussion learning model in their classroom, aiming to achieve students' learning outcomes especially in speaking skills. However, the researchers of this study have not been able to condition the students in such a way that all of them can remain beneficial. So far, the researchers have only been able to minimize the inconvenience of student during learning, which is not comprehensive for all students in the class.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

Muhammad Andriana Gaffar and **Wahyu Satya Gumelar**: guiding and reviewing the manuscript, **Huswatun Hasanah**: creating concepts, designing methodology, collecting data, and data analysis, **Laila Putri Fadilah**: writing and editing the manuscript.

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