Actualizing the Objective of National Philosophy of Education Through Group Learning: A Case Study

Aminuddin Hassan, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to identify the perceptions of rural area students toward the implementation of group activities within English lessons as the second language where it focuses on six queries; what are the perceptions of students toward group activities within English lessons, is group activity approach the learning technique that motivate students to learn English better, is it the technique of group learning that makes students diligent to learn English, is the increase in achievement in the English subject resulted from the application of group learning technique in students’ learning process, is there any difference in perceptions toward group learning technique within English lessons, and is there any difference of perceptions between male and female students toward group learning technique within English lessons. Descriptive design has been used in the study where results show that students enjoy the learning process more by learning in groups and they found that group work activities are beneficial in increasing their motivation to learn and encourage them to study English more attentively. Moreover, results obtained also show that students’ English achievement increases after experiencing group learning activities.

Keywords: Learning through activities, study in groups, English subject

INTRODUCTION

Scholars believe that group learning is an effective technique within the teaching and learning process. According to Jacobs and Ratmanida (1996), past studies had proven the effectiveness of the inculcation of group activities particularly in the teaching and learning of English as a second language in which it is deemed as able to encourage student’s interest to communicate in second language among the group members without the sense of stigma even though there are mistakes in using the language. Group activity is able to stimulate and ignite the interest to learn among students as it requires more of students’ involvement in the learning process. According to Gillies (2002), group activity has been used as one of the strategies in promoting learning. According to Martin et. al. (1993), studies had shown that students are more interested to learn when they are directly interacting with group members.

Learning in groups is effective in stimulating and strikes a lot of positive values toward individuals (Jacobs and Ratmanida, 1996). Based on the study by Nysrntand and Brandt (1989), students that always discuss about their writings with group members will become effective and talented writers as compared to the students that only write for their teacher’s evaluation. According to Goerss (1996), students are and happy and feels enlightened when they are given the chance to complete assignments with their group members. As a matter of fact, they are able to produce high quality assignment. The study by Shachar and Sharan (1994), found out that students are more active and vigorous in group learning process.

Students tend to display their true abilities by making useful suggestions and opinions when learning in groups where affective filter is much lowered. The study by Brown (2000) states that there are
several advantages of applying group work activities in English lessons, wherein teachers are able to create an interactive language learning atmosphere, motivate students to learn, produce autonomous students, and able to prepare the students toward individual learning. The study by Vaughan (2000) informs that past studies have proven the effectiveness of group work activity in encouraging interactions among school students. Vaughan (2002) reports the studies conducted by Cohen (1989); Davidson (1989); Devries and Salvin (1979); Okebukola (1985); Reid (1992); Slavin (1990), and Johnson & Johnson (1994), where all have concluded that the academic achievement relates positively with group learning activities. Moreover, Deutsch (1962) claims that in the real situation, students are mutually dependent on each other and provide support among group members to meet with the learning objectives.

Teachers believe that students achieve their motivation through their involvement in group activities (Gillies and Ashman, 1998). According to Long and Porter (1985), group activities are also achievable and feasible in the teaching and learning of English. Besides, Peacock (1998) states that since long time ago, the group work activities have been extensively recommended and applied as a mode to interact in English lessons, especially to encourage the involvement of students and to inculcate the sense of responsibility among them.

Statement of Problem

Within the real situation, the skill and the efficiency of English Language among rural student are lower than urban student. Most of the exam results show that the pass percentage of English subject for the rural student is lower compared to the pass percentage of English subject for the urban student.

Thus, the educators and researchers found that this situation occurs because rural area students are not motivated to study English subject. Hence, in order to motivate the students, teachers need to accomplish the variety of technique and activity during teaching and learning process, as well as group activity. According to Vaughan (2002), the grouping activity which has been used by Slavin (1978) is able to increases the students motivation during learning the English Language.

The result from past studies also found that learning in groups give positive impact within the education field, from the aspect of the level of student productivity, their attitude towards school, students’ motivation, the social interaction among students, the attendance of school students and etc (Ames, 1984; Crooks, 1988; and Onwuegbuzie, 2001). Therefore, the researcher wants to carry out this research in order to identify, whether this activity is applicable to be implemented within rural area schools in Malaysia.

The Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study are to identify the students’ perception towards group activity during learning English, to identify whether the application of group activity is able to motivate students during learning English, to identify whether the group activity is able to generate diligent attitude in learning English among the students, and to identify whether there was an increase of achievement in English among students after the group activity has been exercised.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to identify students’ view toward group activity. Moreover, this study was carried out to identify whether the group activity is able to increase the students’ motivation towards the learning of English, to identify whether this activity is able to change the students’ attitude in
order to be more diligent to study English, and whether it is able to increase learning skills and efficiency of English among students.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the result of the study is applicable to be used by the teachers as a guide in indentifying the most appropriate and effective teaching method to be applied during the teaching and learning process.

**The Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the perceptions of the students toward the implication of group activities in English learning process.
2. To identify the difference between the perceptions between male and female students towards group work technique within English lessons.
3. To identify whether the technique of group learning is able to motivate the student to study English.
4. To identify whether the technique of learning in groups is able to create sense of diligence to learn English.
5. To identify whether there is an increase of achievement in English subject after the inculcation of group work activities in the learning process.
6. To identify whether there is a difference in perception towards the inculcation of group learning approach within English lessons.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The descriptive study is carried out to acquire the view and thought of the student regarding the application of grouping activity during the learning English process. To fulfill the requirement of the study, the researcher has using a set of survey which is contributed to 105 students.

**Instrumentation**

To obtain the result of the study, the researcher is using a set of survey. This survey is constructed by the researcher himself to fulfill the requirement of his study. The set of survey is contributed to 105 form one students from one of secondary school within the district of Temerloh, Pahang Malaysia. The respondents are given half an hour to answer the survey. The question of the survey is structured. The Figure 1 below explains in brief the content of the study device.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Aspect of study</th>
<th>Number of Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Background of Student</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>The Perception of Student towards Grouping Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Grouping Activity Creates Positive Attitude (Diligence)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Grouping Activity is able to Increases the Achievement of English</td>
<td>8</td>
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Source: Survey Question
To assist the researcher in order to analyze the result of the survey, the researcher has using the scale of Likert 5 point, which is Very Disagree, Disagree, Less Agree, Agree, and Very Agree. The survey which is using scale Likert 5 point is Part B, C, D and E. To examine the confirmation of the study instruments, a lecturer from the Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia who is expert within the realm of the study had been asked by the researcher to analyze the study instruments.

Moreover, to gain the index of trustable of the study instruments, the pioneering research was initially carried out by the researcher at one of the nearby secondary school. The constant of the study’s instrument is determined by using the multiplier of alpha cronbach. After the data had been analyzed by using the operating system of SPSS Version 12 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 12), the result of the pioneering research shows that all the questions within the survey about the perception, has the high value of trustworthiness, with the value of it’s alpha is 0.713.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consists of 105 male and female students among the form one students. According to Mohd. Majid (1990), the using of the sample size should be more than 30 units, as the assumption that normal distribution usually achieved when the size of the sample is more than 30 units.

The subject of the study consists of the students which are among 12 to 13 years old. The sample is chosen by using the voluntary method of sampling. The selection of the sample is basically based on the voluntary respondent. The selection of the sample for form one student is based on the purpose sampling; in order to accomplish the objective of the study which is cannot be done by the other technique of sampling.

Procedure of Collecting Data

To obtain the data, the researcher has requested a permission letter from University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia’s Ministry of Education, and Pahang’s Department of Education to conduct the research. Furthermore, the researcher has asked the permission from the school’s principal to meet the English teacher for the form one student. The purpose is to obtain the verification whether the grouping activity has been conducted during the teaching and learning process.

Afterwards, the researcher has distributed the survey towards the respondents, and informs them regarding the objective of the survey and the way to answer it. The respondents are given half an hour to answer the survey. Subsequently, the researcher analyzes the acquired data to be interpreted. The same procedure also has been carried out during the pioneering research.

Results and Discussions

Several issues have been identified from the execution of this research, such as what is the students’ perception towards grouping activity during English lesson? According to the result of the survey, most of the students like the application of grouping activity during English lesson. They state that learning by grouping is delight, compared to individually study.

The analysis of the study’s result for the first question shows the highest mean score is 4.400, which show that grouping activity is beneficial towards them. While the lowest mean score is 1.867, shows that grouping activity does not helping them within the learning process (item nine) and they dislike the implementation of grouping activity during learning process (item fourteen). The score mean for the three items (positive and negative) shows that students have a positive perception towards the application of grouping activity during the process of teaching and learning English.
The second issue is; is there any difference between the perception among male and female students towards grouping technique within the English lesson? Based on the analysis of t-test, only two categories of perception show the significant difference among male and female students towards the technique of learning in grouping. The categories are the perception towards motivation and the perception towards diligence. Nevertheless, the perception towards grouping activity and the perception towards achievement do not show the mean of significant perception among male and female student. However, the entire of mean score for female student is higher than mean score of male student.

The third issue is also regarding to the students’ perception, which is; what is the perception of the student towards grouping activity in motivating them to learn English? From the analysis of descriptive statistic, the highest mean score is 4.323, which is for item five, which the students inform that they are more motivated and confident during learning in grouping, as their friends help and encourage them whenever they have problem during the learning process (positive item). While the lowest mean score is 2.191 (item 10), which the students inform that the exhortation from the group member during completing their task had made them disappointed (negative item). Based on the positive item and the negative item which had been consisted, it can be said that students have a positive perception towards the technique of learning in grouping, within increase their motivation during learning process.

According to Long dan Porter (1985), and Kohonen et. al. (2001) in Gertrude et. al. (2003), learning by grouping is very effective to motivate student, compared to individually learning or competitively learning.

The fourth issue is; what is the perception of the student towards grouping activity in generating the diligent attitude to study English? This issue is also regarding to the perception of the student. From the analysis of descriptive statistic, the highest mean score is 4.143 (item two), which the students inform that their group member constantly encourage them to be a diligent student (positive item). While the lowest mean score is 2.343 (item six), which the students inform that they feel too lazy in completing the task whenever they are in group. It is because their friends keep criticize them (negative item). Based on the positive item and the negative item, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception towards the technique of learning in grouping, in generating the diligent attitude among them during learning process.

Moreover, according to Flowerdew (1998), during the grouping activity within learning process, all of the students show the tendency to study with diligent and attentive attitude, as well as helping each other to produce the excellent task.

The study by Swafford (1995) in Goerss (1996), found that the positive attitude of student expands whenever they study together, which Swafford found that the students become more diligent and committed towards the given task.

The fifth issue is; what is the perception of the student towards the increase of the achievement in English subject after the application of grouping technique during learning process? From the analysis of descriptive statistic, the highest mean score is 4.333 (item one), which the students inform that learning in grouping is able to expand their knowledge, as well as increases their achievement (positive item). While the lowest mean score is 1.848 (item eight), which the students tell that the advice from the group members had decrease their academic performance (negative item). Based on the value of mean for both
item, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception towards the application of grouping technique in order to increase their achievement in English subject.

The last issue is; is there any different perception towards grouping technique within the English lesson? The result of analysis found that the entire of mean value for the perception based on diligence shows the highest mean value, 3.409. While the lowest mean score based on achievement is 3.279. Based on both mean values, it can be said that there is no difference from the entire of mean values for perception towards the implementation of grouping technique during English lesson. The result shows that all the respondents (male and female) have given the positive perception towards the application of grouping technique within English lesson.

CONCLUSION

There are several implications from this study towards teaching and learning process, particularly towards the teacher and student. One of the results is; the teachers and the students are able to make a decision and assess the effectiveness of grouping activity, as well as identify the appropriate technique of teaching and learning, based on the ability of the students.

The teachers are also can help students to accustom themselves to construct their own idea among the group members. Thus, the students are motivated to interact and expand their previous knowledge.

Furthermore, teachers should realize the importance of creating a smooth atmosphere of learning, so that the students are able to maximize learning opportunity. The pleasure condition during learning process is able to outburst their interest towards the lesson, increase their motivation and activate their involvement during learning process.

It is hoped that, through this study every teachers realize the importance of English, and they are persuaded to communicate in English to stimulate the students to communicate in English too. Thus, they will not use their mother tongue during learning in grouping. The result of the study also realized the students regarding the importance of study in grouping and ensures them to understand the concept or else the principle of grouping activity, so that they are able to actively involve during learning process.

Schools should also play their important role by preparing the sufficient teaching device. The action should be carried out in order to minimize the burdens within teachers’ duty, which in several time they are facing with the problem to prepare their teaching device. Thus, the process of teaching and learning will successfully carried out.

Furthermore, the several parties should give their fully support towards teachers, whether by moral or financial support in order to reduce their burden. It is because, occasionally they need to attend a meeting or course towards the students’ academic achievement, such as the way to increase the achievement of English Language among the students throughout grouping activity.

Moreover, by deeply looking, most of the English teachers are the creative and innovative teacher. Thus, the Official of District Education should take an initiative to carry out a workshop in order to obtain the suggestion or idea from the teachers. Thus, their idea can be used in preparing the material of teaching support, so that it can be used during English lesson, and especially throughout the grouping activity.

REFERENCES


