The Students' Perceptions on the Engagement of Using Small Group Discussion Technique in English learning at High School

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Abstract

Perceptions are interpreting the information process. The study subject was 11th grade EFL students, SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. Therefore, 108 EFL students were taken as the sample by implementing a purposive sampling method. This study was aimed to analyze the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of applying the technique of Small Group Discussion (SGD) in learning English. It is crucial to know how EFL students' perceptions of engagement during the implementation of the method of SGD for helping the EFL teacher evaluate their learning strategy. To solve the study problem, the researcher implemented a descriptive method and a qualitative approach.

Meanwhile, the researcher implemented the three instruments, namely observation, documentation, and the questionnaire in data collection. In analyzing the data, the researcher did three stages; data display, data reduction, as well as conclusion drawing. The study findings showed that the EFL students had a good perception of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. The EFL students believed that the technique of SGD was suitable to be implemented in learning English. They stated that their collaboration with the EFL teacher and classmates become closer. Small group discussion method also impacted their self-efficacy, self-regulation, and their motivation in learning English. However, this method still had a weakness during its implementation. The EFL students were complaining about the passive member of the group and the noise, which made the learning activity no longer conducive. Therefore, the EFL teacher was suggested to be more active in handling the class.

Keywords: *Engagement, Perceptions, Small Group Discussion Method*

INTRODUCTION
Study Background

Learning strategy is one's approach to learning and using the information. The strategy aims to help the students understand information and solve problems. One of the strategies in English education is small group discussion. It is a method that lets some EFL students can cooperate to make a decision, give and share their opinions, create something, and solve problems. (Amy, 2007). In the small group discussion, EFL teachers must have a good command of strategies and apply them in studying the English process because if the EFL teacher uses a lot of right approaches, the EFL students will get success in learning. Education will be useful if the EFL teacher and EFL students have good collaboration, spirit, effort in the process. EFL students feel that they belong in school when EFL teachers express involvement and warmth by treating EFL students with care and affection and showing EFL students that they enjoy having them in class (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

In the learning process, there are some methods that EFL teachers usually use. One of them is the Small Group Discussion (SGD) method. This method is applied almost in all subjects on class activity. It is needed to see how EFL students can cooperate and share their opinions with their friends in the group. SGD might be one of the ways of the EFL teachers for helping the EFL students in their learning process. WBI Evaluation Group (2007) mentions that SGD will assist the group members in building comments as well as reactions

from each other. It is a functional method to be implemented in teaching because the EFL students can assist his or her friends in understanding the material via the group discussion.

Some previous related studies showed that work in a group achieved better results and more content with the learning experience, gave positive behavior, and also created a pleasant collaboration among the EFL students and even EFL students with the EFL teacher than work individually. In accordance with (Cooper, Johnson, and Wilderson, 1980, p. 243-252) stated that comparing with individual work, group work typically results in more considerable efforts to achieve, for example, more positive collaboration among EFL students. It proved that EFL students like to cooperate with their friends in solving a problem. Moreover, in a group, they can share their opinion, give emotional support, and they can listen and talk to each other. Therefore, it might affect their engagement and motivation to learn. Gomleksz (2007, p. 613-625) shows that cooperative learning experience showed positive consequence on directing EFL students' views regarding English learning significantly, as well as fostered better interaction among their peers.

The researcher has done a preliminary study in SMKN 1 Banjarmasin when the researcher does the PPL 2. Firstly, the researcher observed the EFL teacher, then found that the EFL teacher implemented the same method in English teaching in some meetings. The EFL teacher implemented the Method of SGD, and the researcher found that the EFL students were more interested in English learning. The EFL students did not hesitate to participate in any activities provided in the class. Secondly, when the researcher spent three months upon PPL 2 in SMKN 1 Banjarmasin, the researcher also implemented the Small-Method of group discussion in some meetings toward some classes where the researcher did the training. Furthermore, the researcher found the same result.

In the other opportunity, the researcher was called to be a substitutional EFL teacher in SMKN 1 Banjarmasin due to the real EFL teacher has some other activities outside of the school. Via this opportunity, the researcher took a chance to implementation Small-Group Discussion as to the method in the education process. The final result of those activities was the researcher found that the EFL students were more engaged while they are working in a group.

Since knowing that the learning activities did not always depend on the EFL teacher, but also the active participation of the EFL students and the cooperation between the EFL teacher and EFL students become one of the crucial impacts on the education process effectiveness. Based on the explanation above, the researcher studied EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in English learning to know how the SGD itself in EFL students' point of view. Therefore, the EFL teacher could evaluate their teaching strategy if the method is effective or not be implemented in the class in the case of enhancing EFL pupil engagement. Finally, this study was conducted at SMKN 1 Banjarmasin because this school might provide the data needed by the survey.

Study Problem

 "How are EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in English learning at SMKN 1 Banjarmasin?" is the study question formulated by the researcher

Study Objective

The researcher formulated one purpose of the study is to analyze the EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in the English class.

Study Scope and Limitation

1. The eleventh grade EFL students class Vocational TKJ A, B as well as Akuntansi B of SMKN 1 Banjarmasin as study subjects
2. EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing Method of SGD in English learning as study stress.

RELATED LITERATURE
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Perception

Everyone has their own way of seeing, viewing, and perceiving things. The ways of seeing, viewing, and understanding things are called as perception. Everyone might have a different perception of something. The following part will discuss more in-depth about some aspects related to perception.

Definition of Perception

The understanding of perception can be derived from some sources. Altman et al. (1985, p. 85) define it as the way stimuli are grouped as well as selected by a person; hence they can be interpreted meaningfully. It shows a person's view of reality in his/her environment. According to Worchel and Shebilske (1998, p. 117), perception is the interpreting process of information. Huffman et al. (1997, p. 79) stated that perception is selecting, organizing, and interpreting the process of sensory data into useable world's mental images. According to Szilagyi and Wallace (1980, p. 70) define perception as a process where individuals process the incoming stimuli, organize, then interpret them into messages that indicate appropriate behaviors or actions.

From the definitions, perception can be viewed as a conscious mental and cognitive process of observing, comprehending, and responding about a particular thing, in which a person tries to translate the stimuli that he or she receives. Those responses occur in people's awareness via their sensory receptors. Then, these responses will be interpreted as meaningful information about the stimuli and so-called perception.

Everyone has their own way to percept something even though it is the same object to analyze. It is because of people percept something based on their feeling about something and influenced by their own past. Mouly (1973, p. 93) stated that people looking at the same phenomenon but might percept different things from each other. It is supported by Wick and Pick (1978, p. 171-208), who said that the way people percept something and their experience is connected. This phenomenon shows that perception is someone's responses result regarding their experiences.

Factors Influencing Perception

Several factors can influence someone's perception. Altman et al. (1985, p. 86) state that four of the most crucial factors are (1) selection of stimuli, (2) organization of stimuli, (3) the situation, and (4) the person's self-concept.

1. Selection of Stimuli

Many stimuli will come up to our surroundings. We must stress on only a small amount of all the stimuli. This process is called selection. In this process, people try to select certain stimuli and filter out the others. As a result, people will perceive things differently because each person might choose specific signals.

In this study, the EFL students stress on their engagement. How the way EFL students catch the stimuli and percept SGD towards their participation in learning English.

2. Organization of Stimuli

The second factor that can influence perception is organization. The stimuli that have been selected must be arranged. The stimuli are arranged into a screening process. Therefore, it will be meaningful information. The arrangement of the stimuli affects perception.

After the EFL students have collected the stimuli, the next process is to organize the stimuli into valuable things. But, the organization's result would be different from each other and varied. In this case, the target of perception is a small group discussion; thus, the researcher will analyze how the way EFL students organize the stimuli they got from SGD toward their engagement.

3. The Situation

Another factor influencing perception is the situation. A person's familiarities, expectations, and experiences might affect what that person perceives about a particular thing. Moreover, understanding the condition is also related to the way how well a person adapts his or her behavior to the situation. For example, a person who is just graduated from college might find difficulty in understanding the norms and values in a new place due to he or she has no experience yet in which he or she works. In this case, the EFL students deal with the way they adjust the behavior to the situations.

4. The Person's Self –Concept

The last factor influencing perception is self-concept. The way people see and perceive themselves are usually called perception. These ways can affect their perception of things in the world around them. The self-concept is crucial because the person's mental picture might change much of what they see and perceive in their life.

Group Discussion

Group discussion is one of the methods implemented by the EFL teacher at SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. This method is applied as a course of action for solving problems that one encounters in the classroom activity, especially in a small group discussion. Its' implementation is aimed at helping the EFL students to engage themselves in their learning process. The EFL students try to show their effort during the application of group discussion. The following part will be discussing deeper about some aspects related to group discussion strategy.

Definition of Group Discussion

Group discussion is when a group of people is together to do work, and they are doing interactions with the member of the group and who are psychologically sensible of one another and who are taking part themselves to be a group on a learning process. It is in accordance with Amy (2007). She says that a group discussion is a group where some EFL students can cooperate to make decisions, give and/share their opinions on a given topic, create something, and solve problems.

Types of Group Discussion

There are two types of group discussions. They are "large-group discussion and small-group discussion" (Borrich, 1996, p. 325).

1. Large-Group Discussion

The large-Group discussion consists of all EFL students in the class who are discussing a topic. The EFL teacher in the discussion guides the EFL students. Sometimes this type of group discussion is difficult to be handled because many learners are interacting.

As an EFL teacher, we may get challenging to manage the class. In this type, the EFL teachers lead the group discussion process. Hence, the EFL teachers can do, such as teaching, demonstrating, explaining the topic, asking, and answering questions if the EFL students have any.

2. Small-Group Discussion

Small-Group discussion is helpful for the EFL students to increase their participation or engagement in the group discussion. The member of the group is usually around five to ten people. The EFL students will have a big chance to speak up their opinions when they are in small numbers in group discussions. The EFL students have much time to participate in the group discussion. Therefore, it can increase their communication skill within each group member. This study will be for implementing to SGD because this type of group discussion is performed by the EFL teacher in SMKN 1 Banjarmasin.

It is a method which can be implemented by the EFL teacher to let the EFL students work with their friends to solve their own problem together. In Small Group Discussion, the EFL teacher divided a large number of EFL students in the class into the smaller one to achieve some objectives such as let the EFL students endure the responsibility for their own learning, develop social and leadership skills, and become involved in the learning activities or engaging EFL students.

Referring to Bany and Johnson (1964, p. 31), the Group discussion might seem to be a success when two or more people have as one quality and interdependence with each other. In Small Group Discussion, the EFL students also have the opportunity to communicate face-to-face to solve the problems and achieve a group goal because the key to fruitful group discussion is communication. It requires the EFL students' participation or involvement in learning activities, and therefore in SGD, the EFL teacher can see the team-working of his/her EFL students.

The Activities for Small Group Discussion

According to Brown (2000, p. 183-186), several types of activities can be conducted in a classroom when the class has an SGD method. Those activities are Game, and second is Role play and simulation, Drama, Projects, Interview, Brainstorming, Information-gap, Jigsaw, Problem-solving and decision making, last is opinion exchange.

1. Games

    A game could be any activity that formalizes a method into units that can be scored in some ways. Guessing games are common language classroom activities. The Yes/No question can be played in the group after a demonstration at the front.

2. Role-play and Simulation

    Role-play and simulation offer good follow up to allow a lesson in which the class practices a structure with functional value. Role-play minimally involves giving a role to one or more members of a group and assigning an objective or purpose that participants must be accomplished. A group role-play might engage a discussion of political issues, with each person assigned to represent a particular point of view. Simulations involve a more complex structure and often larger group where the entire group is working via an imaginary situation as a social unit, and solving problems.

3. Drama

Drama is a formalized form of role-playing or simulations, with a storyline and script. The EFL students in small groups may develop their own short dramatization of some event, conduct scriptwriting, and conduct scene rehearsing as a group.

4. Project

For young learners who can significantly benefit from hands-on approaches to language, particular projects can be rewarding indeed. For example, several small groups could each be conducting separate things: Group A creates the environmental bulletin broads for the whole school; Group B develops fact sheets; Group C craft a three-dimensional display; Group D distributed newsletter for the whole school, etc. As learners get absorbed in purposeful projects, both receptive and productive language is used.

5. Interview

A popular activity for group work is the interview, which is functional at all proficiency levels. The goal of the interview could be restricted to implementing a requesting function, learning vocabulary for expressing personal data, producing questions, etc.

6. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method whose purpose is to initiate some sort of thinking process. It is often put to exemplary implementation in preparing EFL students to read a text, to discuss a complex issue, or to write on a topic. In brainstorming, no discussion of relative merits of thought takes place; everything and anything goes. This way, all ideas are legitimate, and EFL students are released to soar the heights and plumb the depths, as it were, with no obligation to defend a concept.

7. Information-gap

These activities consist of a wide variety of methods, where conveying or requesting the information is the objective. Learners' primary attention to information and not to form language and the importance of communicative interaction for reaching the objective are two focal characteristics of the information-gap method. The information that learners must seek can be range from simple to complex. For example, each member of the small group could be given the objective of finding out the others' birthday, address, favorite food, etc. And filling it in the little chart with the information they get.

8. Jigsaw

It is an information gap type where each group member is given some specific information, which to pool all information to achieve some objective as the goal. In a large group, "strip-story" is known to be the most popular jigsaw method that can be used. The EFL teacher takes a moderately short written narrative or conversation and cuts each sentence of the text into a large strip, shuffles the stirps, and gives to the learner. The goal is to determine which each sentence belongs to the whole context of the story, and to stand in their position once it is identified and to read off the reconstructed story.

9. Problem Solving as well as Decision making

The method of problem solving group stress on the group's solution to the specified issue. They center learners' attention on a significant cognitive challenge and not focus on grammatical or phonological form. Their problem might be relatively simple such as giving direction on maps.

Decision-making methods are simply one kind of problem-solving where the ultimate goal is for EFL students to make a decision. For example, a debate on environmental hazards might reveal several possible causes of air pollution. Still, if decision making is the goal, then the group would have to decide what they would actually do to reduce toxins in our air.

10.   Opinion Exchange

The opinion is a belief or feeling, which could not be found on empirical data others could take issue with. Moral, ethical, religious, and political issues are usually "hot" items for classroom debates, arguments, and discussions.

Advantages as well as Disadvantages of Small-Group Discussion
A method in teaching always has an advantage and disadvantage. Some condition in its practical process causes this. (Harmer, 2001, p. 117)

A.   Advantages of Small Group Discussion
1.   It strongly improves EFL students' speaking opportunity
2.   EFL students' opinions can be varied, and it will enhance EFL students' contributions.
3.   EFL students learn more about the skills of association and deliberation.
4.   It increases the independence of EFL students to decide their choice in a group without interference from the EFL teacher.
5.   EFL teachers tried to avoid completely passive EFL students in group work. However, the EFL students can take their portion of the contribution in a group.
B.   Disadvantages of Small Group Discussion
1.   It is likely to be noisy. Some EFL teacher feels that any control and the whole class feeling, which became exciting may dissipate when the teacher divides groups into smaller entities.
2.   Some EFL students enjoy it since they would prefer to be the stress of EFL teacher's attention rather than working with their peers.
3.   Individuals may fall into group roles that become fossilized so that some are passive, whereas others may dominate.
4.   Groups can take longer to organize, takes time, and chaotic.

Engagement
The way the EFL students increase their achievement, positive behaviors, and being active in a classroom is called engagement. The EFL students will make a great effort to improve their performance. Moreover, the EFL students are supposed to be able to motivate themselves to participate in the classroom activity, especially in group discussions, to increase their engagement. The following part will discuss more in-depth about some crucial aspects related to EFL pupil engagement.
Martin and Dowson (2009, p. 327-365) stated that EFL students' engagement by origin is said to be multidimensional. Such multidimensional nature into both a strategy for improving educational achievement as an independent outcome which is valuable of schooling. EFL students' engagement is also implemented to describe EFL students'

willingness to participate in routine school activities, such as submitting school work, attending class, as well as following class instructions. It is supported by Chapman (2003, p. 1-7), who considered EFL students' engagement to include EFL students' participation in lesson and curriculum planning, classroom management, and other pedagogical involvement tasks. Other studies even stated that EFL students engage in terms of interest, effort, motivation, time-on-task, the time EFL students spent on a particular learning task.

In this study, the researcher stresses the EFL students' perception of their engagement in their participation and involvement in the learning activities if the EFL teacher implementation Method of SGD in teaching English.

Definition of Engagement

EFL pupil engagement is primarily and historically about increasing achievement, positive behaviors, and a sense of belonging in all EFL students. Over time, the EFL pupil engagement strategy was further developed and more broadly implemented as a means of generally managing classroom behaviors. EFL pupil engagement has been created around the goal of upgrading all EFL students' capabilities for learning how to become or how to learn lifelong learners in a knowledge-based society.

EFL pupil engagement could become both an accountability outcome unto itself or a strategic learning process. Moreover, Kuh (2009, p. 683) also defines EFL pupil engagement as the time as well as effort EFL students devote for activities which linked empirically to desired outcomes of college as well as what institutions conduct to induce EFL students for participating in these activities. Barkley (2010, p. 6) states that EFL pupil engagement is the product of motivation as well as active learning. It tells that if there is an element missing, the product will not occur.

Factors Influencing Engagement

There are so many factors influencing EFL students' engagement. According to Barkley (2009), EFL students' perceptions influence EFL students' participation. It was because EFL students' perceptions can identify the engagement of EFL students. If the EFL students perceive the SGD implementation as a method implemented in the classroom activity positively, they will have positive behavior and be engaged enough in the classroom activity automatically. Alternatively, if the EFL students perceive group discussion implementation as a method implemented in the classroom activity negatively, they will also have negative behavior responses and less engaged during the classroom activity in the small group discussion.

Moreover, some experts elaborate on five factors that can influence EFL pupil engagement. Those are collaboration with EFL teachers, collaboration with peers and classmates, self-efficacy, academic self-regulated learning, and motivation as well as interest in learning. These are the more profound explanation of five factors that can influence EFL pupil engagement.

1.   Collaborations with EFL teachers

There are two bases for EFL pupil-EFL teacher collaborations called as interpersonal liking and trust. EFL students feel that they belong in school when EFL teachers express involvement and warmth by treating EFL students with care and affection and showing EFL students that they enjoy having them in class (Martin & Dowson, 2009, p. 327-365). When EFL teachers are dependable sources of emotional and instrumental support in difficult times, EFL students feel connected to their EFL teachers and safe at school.

EFL students also need structured interactions, in which EFL teachers set high standards, clear expectations, and reasonable limits for EFL students' behavior

performances, and consistently follow via on their demands. Stipek (2002) states that optimal structure includes EFL teachers' confidence in EFL students' underlying abilities as well as helping EFL students figure out how to reach high levels of understanding and performance.

The most crucial things are breaking tasks into manageable components that EFL students are ready to master, and the provision of informational feedback so that when EFL students do not meet expectations, EFL teachers explain to them how to improve.

2. Collaboration with Peers and Classmates

When EFL students have opportunities for talking as well as listening to each other, providing emotional support, sharing learning experiences, and developing respect, they are more likely to feel that they are cared for and understood by their peers. EFL students also think that they belong to each other. Warm interactions with classroom peers for creating a comforting situation and assist EFL students' need for relatedness.

3. Self-efficacy

Tyler and Boelter (2008, p. 29) define self-efficacy as a perceived capability for learning and carrying out a task or set of behaviors at an identified, optimal level of performance. This means that the conviction of each EFL pupil in the group to master the activity in a group discussion is the main factor that can influence their engagement and achievement.

Self-efficacy is related to the prior achievement of EFL students. Those who hold high academic self-efficacy participate in learning activities more actively. They are more diligent and finish tasks more successfully than those who hold lower self-efficacy (Bandura et al., 1996, p. 1206-1222).

4. Academic Self-regulated Learning

Academic self-regulation relates to the degree to which EFL students are motivated to learn, think about their own learning, and proactively make self–regulatory processes implementation (strategies and tools) for upgrading their learning. This means that self-regulation is related to the EFL students' motivations to be engaged in the learning process to improve their learning.

This is also in accordance with Rush and Balamoutsou (2006, p. 4). They state that engaged EFL students share the values and approaches to the learning and teaching process. Also, they spend time and energy on educationally meaningful tasks, learn with others inside as well as outside the classroom, actively explore ideas confidently with others, and learn to value perspectives other than their own. When EFL students become part of a learning community, they are positive about their identity as a member of a group. Also, they focus on learning, ask questions in class, feel comfortable contributing to class discussions, spend time at campus, have made a few friends, and are motivated in the classroom activity.

5. Motivation as well as Interest in Learning

Motivation is described in terms of "conditions and processes that account for the encouragement, direction, greatness, and preservation of effort" (Katzell & Thompson, 1990, p. 144). To explore motivation is to understand the goal behind the engagement of EFL students and, therefore, what EFL teachers can do to enhance this engagement.

Fostering motivation among EFL students is crucially crucial for short term learning and also for preparing EFL students to be lifelong learners. According to Bong (2004, p. 296), the way that EFL students feel about themselves and learning tasks differs markedly across situations, so that EFL students who are highly motivated in one domain may or may not be enthusiastic in other areas. Furthermore, personal interest is more

durable and stable than a situational interest in that it emerges as a way of being over time as individuals experience success and pleasure in learning (Harlen, 2006; Tsai et al., 2008). This shows that personal interest in each individual is a more crucial factor to pleasure learners in learning.

Claxton (2007, p. 12) further suggests that activities and curricula must have the following factors to engage learners:

1. Relevancy, the topic connects with EFL students' interests and concern;

2. Responsibility, EFL students have genuine control over what, why, how, and when they organize their learning; and

3. The reality, solving problems, or making progress genuinely matters to someone.

From the theories above, the researcher infers that engagement is the participation of the EFL students in some activities in the classroom. In this research, engagement is a tool to measure the method effectiveness implemented by the EFL teacher that is Small Group Discussion. If the engagement of the EFL students is increasing after the SGD implementation, the method can be stated as one of the practical techniques that could build the engagement of the EFL students.

Related Previous Studies

In this part, the researcher provides a related study about the perception and EFL students' engagement on the SGD implementation, which has been done by the previous studies. Some researchers have conducted research that relates to the researcher's study; some of them are as follows:

Some study indicates that EFL students can be more content and attain better results with their learning experiences in group work in contrast with individual work (Gross 1993; Springer, Stanne & Donovan 1999). Compared with individual work, group work typically results in more considerable efforts to achieve, for example, more positive collaborations among EFL students (Cooper, Johnson, Johnson & Wilderson 1980). Gomleksiz's (2007) study shows that cooperative learning experience had a tremendously positive effect on directing EFL students' views towards learning English and fostered better interactions among EFL students as well.

Alternatively, Li and Campbell's (2008) study dealing with Asian EFL students in New Zealand revealed not only the strength of group work, but also some detrimental factors that affect group dynamics, such as members' views and willingness to cooperate and contribute as a team, the composition of the group, EFL students' competing demands on EFL students' time and attention, heterogeneity from the natural abilities of EFL students, and varying cultural values and beliefs held by group members.

Kagan (1992) argues five basic principles that facilitate group work: positive interdependence, equal participation, individual accountability, simultaneous interaction, as well as group processing. Kagan emphasizes positive relationships as the core of cooperative learning. A commitment to success as each person's efforts gives benefits to the whole group. The second principle, individual accountability, refers to each member being regarded as crucial and must be accountable for contributing his or her share of work. Third, equal participation means that all group members should actively participate in group work. The fourth principle is simultaneous interaction, which is face-to-face interaction and the

promotion of each member's successful learning to encourage sharing resources and to help and praising each other's efforts to learn. Lastly, Kagan argues for the importance of group discussion by suggesting that EFL students should be taught communication skills, effective leadership, decision-making skills, trust-building, and conflict-management skills so that they can discuss and monitor each members' performance and behaviors.

In this study, there were some differences from the previous studies above. First, the perceptions of the EFL students that would be analyzed by the researcher is going to stress only on the engagement. Second, the study subject was 11th grade EFL students, SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. Therefore, the researcher believed that this study is a new kind of research that it is possible to do.

STUDY METHOD
Study Design
The study method is the Descriptive method and qualitative study approach. The reason why the researcher chose this approach was that the approach was suitable for this study, which was trying to analyze the perceptions. Perception is an abstract thing that must be variation and describe-able only in a descriptive form. The most common data collection method implemented in the qualitative study is observation, interview, and document analysis. The researcher gathered the data by implementing the survey method.

The researcher intended to know the perceptions of EFL students on the engagement toward small group discussions, thus the survey method was conducted. Surveys also believed to assist the researcher in summarizing and measuring the characteristics, views, opinions, and feelings of EFL students. In this study, the survey method was implemented to estimate and summarize EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing the SGD method.

Study Setting
The study was conducted at SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. Jalan Mulawarman, Tulak Dalam, Banjarmasin Tengah, Kalimantan Selatan. There were 1558 EFL students at this school with 626 boys and 932 girls. This school has 87 EFL teachers who teach implementing K-13. There were 44 classes at this school, and the average EFL students in each class were 36 EFL students. English subject is taught once a week in every class.

Study Subject
This study subjects were the eleventh-grade EFL students of SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. The researcher took 108 EFL students of vocational class TKJ A, B, and Akuntansi B, which has 36 EFL students in each class. In this case, the researcher employed the Purposive Sampling method in determining the sample. The method was chosen since the researcher had an observation and found that the EFL teacher implemented Small-Group Discussion in those classes.

Study Instruments
In conducting this study, the researcher needed some supporting instruments. To collect the data which is required, the researcher implemented observation and questionnaire as the study instrument.

Observation
The observation was held during the education process by filling the observation sheet. The observation stresses on the EFL students' view and behavior during the SGD implementation method. Several factors were observed in the classroom: the EFL students' collaboration with the EFL teacher, the EFL students' cooperation with peers and

classmates, the EFL students' self-efficacy, the EFL students' self-regulation, the EFL students' motivation as well as interest in learning English.

The observation sheet was in the checklist form. It was implemented to investigate the natural phenomena of the study subject. It was applied to make sure the observation was more suitable for reality. Therefore, the observer should attempt to write their observations, either during or directly, at the end of the lesson.

Documentation

In this research, the researcher implemented Public records that could be defined as the official, ongoing records of an organization's activities (O'Leary, 2014). The researcher took some pictures during the observation to be the data of documentation.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to the EFL students of class vocational TKJ A, B, and Akuntansi B as the representative class of the study. The questionnaire was distributed at the end of the meeting. It was distributed to explore EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. The researcher made the blueprint of the questionnaire to make the statements in the questionnaire being structured.

Data Collection

Observation

In conducting the study, observation is implemented by the researcher. The data was collected on October 22-24, 2019. The data was about the EFL students' engagement in applying methods of SGD in learning English. This data was needed to see the EFL students' views and behavior in English learning via the SGD method. This data was also proved and strengthen the data gotten from the questionnaire.

Questionnaire

In this study, the researcher implemented a questionnaire to find out the answer to the question of the formulation problem. It was about what are the EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. The researcher distributed the questionnaires, which contained three open-ended questions to the EFL students of vocational TKJ A, B, and Akuntansi B.

In this study, the researcher implemented the open-ended question. In this type, the participants gave their answers in the form of a description. Therefore, the participant could take a chance to share their opinion in a larger space and let the EFL students share and give more detailed opinions, feelings, and suggestions.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study implemented a qualitative approach to describe the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of applying methods of SGD in learning English. In data analysis, the researcher did three steps for qualitative study based on Miles and Haberman's theory. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are three crucial phases in analyzing data: data reduction (1), data display (2), as well as conclusion drawing or verification (3).

Observation

There were three major phases on analyzing the data on observation; those are:

1.   Data Reduction

It refers to stressing, selecting, abstracting, simplifying, and transforming the

process of the data that appear in the written up transcription of field notes. The data from the observation was transcribed into the written transcript to be developed into the observation sheet.

2.   Data Display

After the data from the observation was transcribed into the written transcript, the next step in analyzing the data was to displaying the data to be meaningful. The researcher explained the result from observation, and then the data were organized and arranged in a pattern so that it would be understood easily.

In this study, the data reduced by the researcher were then described as the study data contained in the factors influencing engagement based on the experts in Chapter II. The observation consisted of main points to be found, which was the EFL students' perceptions of the involvement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English.

3.   Conclusion Drawing

The last step of analyzing the data is conclusion drawing/verification. After analyzing the data, the researcher concluded the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in learning English.

Questionnaire

The data derived from the interview will be integrated and display in descriptive forms. There were significant phases to analyze data from the questionnaire; those are:

1.   Data Reduction

Based on the result of data reduction, the data found were displayed in the form of a data display from the questionnaire guide. (*see appendix 2)*

2.   Data Display

After displaying the data from the observation, the researcher made some questions in the questionnaire sheet and distributed it by google form. Then, the researcher compares the data from observation with the data from the questionnaire.

3.   Conclusion Drawing

The last step of analyzing the data is conclusion drawing/verification. After analyzing the data, the researcher concluded the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English.

Data Triangulation

Even the qualitative study is subjective, the researcher should serve the data as real as possible to make the data valid and reliable. Triangulation is the combination of two methods or more in collecting the data.

In this study, the researcher implemented three instruments to gather the data, and those are observation, documentation, and questionnaire. The observation was needed to be applied to see the EFL students' view and behavior during the SGD implementation method. The researcher also implemented documentation to be the evidence of observation results. Then, to confirm the result of the observation, the researcher performed a questionnaire. Via this instrument, the researcher collects the perceptions of EFL students.

STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description

This study stressed on analyzing the EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in learning English. There were 108 eleventh grade EFL students being the study subject. The data of this study were obtained by doing the observation during the education activities when the EFL teacher implemented an SGD method. The purpose of the observation was to analyze EFL students' engagement in

learning English. Then, the researcher also distributed the questionnaire in terms of analyzing the EFL students' perceptions via a google form.

The data gathering process started on Tuesday, October 22, 2019. The researcher observed the 36 EFL students in class XI B TKJ. It was continued with XI B AKL and XI-A TKJ in the same day on Thursday, October 24, 2019. Then, the researcher continued distributing the questionnaire to all the EFL students via a google form.

Study Findings

The data of the study were divided into observation and questionnaire results. From the observation that conducted once in each class, and the questionnaire which was distributed in the three classes, several things were found in the English education process in the classroom covering the EFL students' engagement, EFL students' perceptions, and the EFL students' perceptions on the engagement.

Observation Result

The observation was conducted on Tuesday, October 22, 2019, in the class TKJ B and on October 24, 2019, in the class TKJ A and Akuntansi B. Firstly, the researcher found that in applying the SGD method, the EFL teacher explained the material by giving some example of Direct and Indirect speech and how to change them. The EFL teacher implemented the sentences that made the EFL students interested because it was daily used. Then, the EFL teacher divided them into six groups, which contained six members. The EFL teacher had prepared some sentences which were going to show up on the slide one by one. The EFL students had to change them, and the fastest group with the correct answer got the point.

From the observation sheet that the researcher made by adapting the theory of factors influencing engagement by the experts in Chapter II, the researcher found that the EFL students were engaged in English learning by implementing the SGD method. The following part will discuss more in-depth about the EFL students' engagement in learning English.

1)   The EFL students' collaboration with the EFL teacher

The first thing that the researcher found was the EFL teacher assimilated with the EFL students. It could be seen since the EFL teacher explained the material about direct and indirect speech briefly then asked the EFL students to count the number then divided them into eight groups. Then, the EFL teacher gave some direction about what the EFL students had to do in the group.

The researcher also found that the EFL teacher involved in any classroom activities. The EFL teacher taught EFL students in a fun way. She made the class so relaxing and enjoyable by creating some positive energy and behavior. When the EFL students got confused when they were requested to determine the name of their group that is about their favorite boy/girl band, the EFL teacher also gave some suggestions. Moreover, when the EFL students were punished and asked to sing before their peers, the EFL teacher supported the EFL students by singing along with them without any hesitation.

Furthermore, the EFL teacher also treated EFL students with care. It could be seen when the EFL teacher assisted the EFL students when they had some trouble. The EFL teacher appeared at their table and asked their group one by one if they had something they could not understand.

2)   EFL students' collaboration with Peers and Classmates.

The second thing that the researcher found that was about the excellent collaboration among the EFL students in the class in English learning by implementing the SGD method. When they were requested to work in a group and asked to do some tasks, the EFL students actively discuss with their friends towards the issues. They were talked and listened to

others' opinions. They also gave a chance to all the members in a group to share and to value others' opinions. The EFL students also support their members' presentation of the discussion result.

However, the researcher also found that some EFL students were passive during the discussion. They did not participate in any classroom activities and enjoyed their work.

3) The EFL students' Self-Efficacy

The third thing that the researcher found that was about the EFL students' self-efficacy by learning English in small group discussion. The EFL students were comfortable with mastering the lesson material. It could be seen from when the EFL teacher asked them to answer the question before their peers, and the EFL students had correct answers. It was also because the members of the group were helping each other. When some of them got some trouble in understanding the material, they were assisted by their friends and got more explanation. Not to mention, the EFL students could extend their creativity by more confident in performing before their peers with their group.

4) The EFL students' Self-Regulation

The fourth thing that the researcher found from the observation was about the EFL students' good self-regulation in English learning via the SGD method. The researcher found that the EFL students set a particular strategy to be the best group in the class by dividing the tasks to every group member. It was proven to succeed because their works were faster to be finished. The EFL students also actively explore ideas with others in determining the best decision. In discussing the tasks, the researcher found that the EFL students were actively shared their opinion and valued the other opinion. The EFL students also proved to have good self-regulation by actively ask some questions. The EFL students did not hesitate to ask for something they did not understand to the EFL teacher.

5) The EFL students' Motivation as well as Interest in learning English

The fifth thing that the researcher found was about the EFL students' highly motivated and interested in English learning via the SGD method. The researcher found that the EFL students were motivated to learn English in an SGD by seeing that most of the EFL students were excited to do the tasks and actively discuss with their group members. They assisted and supported each other. The EFL students also were interested in English learning because they could enjoy every task and perform before their peers excitedly.

6) The Curricula

The researcher found that the curricula that the EFL teacher implemented were proven to influence the EFL students' engagement by implementing methods of SGD in teaching English. From the observation, the researcher knew that the curricula that the EFL teacher implemented connected with the EFL students' interest and concern by served the material with the newest style.

The researcher also found that via small group discussions, the EFL students were asked and had a chance to responsible for their own learning process. It was because a method of SGD was EFL pupil-centered, which let the EFL students explore directly to their learning activity.

The last thing was the researcher found that via the SGD method, the EFL students had some progress in learning English. It could be seen from the engagement of the EFL students that were increasing by actively participated in the discussion, more comfortable to solve the problem, got more confidence, etc.

Questionnaire Result

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to all the EFL students in the three classes via a google form. There were three questions contained on the questionnaire; those are:

1)   What is your opinion about the SGD method?

The EFL students stated that SGD was an effective and suitable method for increasing EFL students' engagement. They believed that via the technique of SGD, they could share the opinion, knowledge, positive energy, and personal support. It could their social experience and interaction by getting them closer to their classmates. They could assist each other for something they could not understand and in determining the best decision. Thus, they could be more confident with themselves in extending their creativity.

They also believed that the method of SGD could increase their motivation as well as interest in English learning by making the learning process became so enjoyable and relaxing. The EFL students also stated that their collaboration with the EFL teacher became closer so that they could ask some questions without any hesitation.

Alternatively, some EFL students believed that this method is not practical due to they could not feel the significant difference in working individually. They also stated that some passive EFL students did not participate in any discussion. They said that they were working alone, and the other members did not assist them.

2)   Could the method of SGD increase your engagement in learning English? Why?

Most of the EFL students believed that the method of SGD could increase their engagement in learning English. It was because, in the group, they could spread the positive energy and make them influenced by their engaged friends in the group. They were reminded by their friends to keep working actively in every classroom activity. SGD also trained them to talk in public and cooperated with the other members.

Somehow, some EFL students stated that the method of SGD made them more passive to work because they gave all the tasks to the other friends in the group. Therefore, the group member was so crucial and became the main factor influencing EFL students' engagement.

3)   Does SGD have the benefit of your learning process? Why?

Most of the EFL students believed that the method of SGD had the benefit of their learning process. The method of SGD got them to be more active in the learning process. They believed that they could get closer to their EFL teacher and classmates. It also could increase the EFL students' capability to socialize by discussing with their friends in the group. It built the encouragement of giving and asking the opinion, built confidence, creativity, and innovation. The EFL students also stated that in small group discussions, the tasks were being faster to be finished, and they would be easier to solve the problem.

Discussion

This part presented the discussion of the study findings. This study was about the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing the SGD method. The study subject was 108 EFL students of class TKJ A, B, and Akuntansi B. The study subject was chosen based on the recommendation of the English EFL teacher who implemented the method of SGD in English teaching in those classes. This study applied a qualitative approach. In gathering the data, the researcher performed two primary instruments, namely observation, and questionnaire.

Based on the observation and the questionnaire result, the researcher found that the EFL students' had a good perception of the engagement of implementing the SGD method. It could be seen from the EFL students' collaboration with the EFL teacher, the EFL

students' collaboration with peers and classmates, the EFL students' self-efficacy, the EFL students' self-regulation, the EFL students' motivation and interest, and the curricula learning English via SGD method.

Firstly, the EFL students had a pleasant collaboration with the EFL teacher in learning via the SGD method. It was proven by the EFL teacher who wanted to assimilate with the EFL students. There was no barrier between the EFL teacher and the EFL students. The EFL teacher created a warm situation and made the EFL students enjoy the lesson. The EFL students also involved in any classroom activities. The EFL teacher was very kind and humble. She was helping the EFL students to determine the name of the group and sing along with the EFL students. The EFL teacher also treated the EFL students with care. It could be seen from the EFL teacher who always asked the EFL students if they had any trouble by appearing in their table.

From the explanation, the researcher inferred that the active EFL teacher was a very crucial part of making the EFL students' engagement increasing. It is in accordance with (Martin & Dowson, 2009), who stated that "When EFL teachers are dependable sources of emotional and instrumental support in difficult times, EFL students feel connected to their EFL teachers and safe at school. The EFL students feel that they belong in school when EFL teachers express involvement and warmth by treating EFL students with care and affection and showing EFL students that they enjoy having them in class".

Secondly, the EFL students had a pleasant collaboration with their peers and classmates in English learning by implementing the SGD method. It could be seen from the EFL students who were active in participating in any discussion with their group members. The EFL students gave their opinion and also listened to others' opinions. The EFL students also stated that in small group discussions, they got closer to all the EFL students in the class because they had a chance to talk and solve the problems together. Moreover, the EFL students stated that they supported each other if one of them had to present their discussion result before their peers. It is in accordance with Furman & Buhrmester (1985), who stated that warmth is a crucial feature of high-quality peer collaborations as well as highly practical classroom situations.

However, some EFL students also believed that the member of the group was the most crucial factor influencing their engagement. If they got engaged friends in the group, they would be engaged as well by seeing and following their friends' instruction. It was because the positive energy by the engaged friend could stimulate them to be active.

Thirdly, the EFL students' had functional self-efficacy when they were learning via the SGD method. It was proven by the EFL students who were easy to master the lesson material. It was because, in small group discussions, they could ask their friends in the group if they had something they do not understand. The EFL students also stated that in small group discussions, they were discussing the task together in terms of determining the best result or the best decision. Thus, the EFL students were more confident to answer every question and present it before their peers with no doubt. It is in accordance with Tyler & Boelter (2008), who defines self-efficacy as the perceived capability to learn and carry out a task or set of behaviors at an identified, optimal level of performance". Furthermore, the EFL students believed that their confidence was increasing if they were learning English via small group discussions.

Fourthly, the researcher found that the EFL students had good self-regulation in English learning by implementing the SGD method. The EFL students proved it was actively set some strategies to be the best group in class in the case to gain a high score in English subject. The EFL students divided the tasks to every group member so that the tasks would be faster to be finished. In finishing the tasks, the EFL students explore and with the other's opinion to make the answer was variety, and they got the new knowledge from their friends. Moreover, the EFL students were active in asking the question to the EFL teacher if

they had some trouble.

This is also in accordance with Rush and Balamoutsou (2006, p. 4). They state that engaged EFL students share the values and approaches to the process of learning and teaching. Also, they spend time and energy on educationally meaningful tasks, learn with others inside as well as outside the classroom, actively explore ideas confidently with others, and learn to value perspectives other than their own. When EFL students are part of a learning community, they are positive about their identity as a member of a group, stressed on learning, ask questions in class, feel comfortable contributing to class discussions, spend time at campus, have made a few friends, and are motivated in the classroom activity.

Fifthly, the EFL students were motivated and interested in English learning via the SGD method. Most of the EFL students agreed that SGD made their motivation increased by learning in a fun way. In SGD, they asked their friends to explain more, explore the idea, and the willingness to be the best group made them motivated to learn more and discussed the tasks seriously. The EFL students were found interested in English learning with SGD by creating the excitement and fun situation in the class. They have participated in any classroom activity. Katzell and Thompson (1990) define motivation as conditions as well as processes that account for the encouragement, greatness, direction, as well as effort preservation. Additionally, the EFL students admitted that the primary purpose of being engaged in the classroom was because they wanted to get a high score in English subject. Meanwhile, the other EFL students stated that being involved is everyone's responsibility.

Sixthly, the method of SGD assisted the curricula that the EFL teacher implemented to be relevant, responsible, and real. It is proven by the topic which talked about direct and indirect speech connected to the EFL students' interest and concern. Plus, the EFL teacher enjoyably served the lesson material and divided them into the group. It could assist the EFL students in being more active in English learning because they could discuss the tasks together. The EFL students were also responsible for their learning process. They were separated into a group to discuss the task with their friends.

Moreover, the EFL students stated that they got the progress in English learning via SGD method. It could be seen from their collaboration with the EFL teacher and classmates became closer, increase the EFL students' capability to socialize by discussing with their friends in the group. It built the encouragement of giving and asking the opinion, built confidence, creativity, and innovation. The EFL students also stated that in small group discussions, the tasks were being faster to be finished, and they would be easier to solve the problem. It is in accordance with the theory from Claxton (2007), who stated that "another factor influencing engagement is the curricula which had relevancy, responsibility, and reality."

As a conclusion of the observation and the questionnaire result, most of the EFL students' percept positively on the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. They stated that their collaboration with EFL teachers, peers, and classmates became closer. It has similarities with the result of the previous related study (Cooper, Johnson, Johnson & Wilderson 1980), who stated that "Compared with individual work, group work typically results in greater efforts to achieve, for example, more positive collaborations among EFL students."

The EFL students also added that the method of SGD made their achievement and motivation, and learning English was increasing. It was because, in SGD, they had the responsibility for their learning. The EFL teacher let them discuss the lesson material with their friends in the group. It has a similarity with the previous study from Gross (1993) as well as Springer, Stanne, and Donovan (1999). They mentioned that EFL students can be more content as well as achieve better results with their learning experiences in the group, rather than individually.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Having done exploring the discussion of the study findings which stress the explanation of the EFL students' perceptions on the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in learning English, the researcher can draw some conclusions and suggestions, as follow.

Conclusion

As stated above part, this study was aimed to analyze the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing the method of SGD in learning English. This study was conducted in eleventh-grade vocational class *TKJ* A, B, and *Akuntansi* B of SMKN 1 Banjarmasin. It was held in October 2019, as stated in the study findings that were obtained by applying observation and questionnaires to get the data.

In conclusion, the majority of the EFL students had a good perception of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. The majority of the EFL students stated that the method of SGD is an excellent method to be implemented in learning English. They also indicated that the technique of SGD increased their engagement in English learning by making them discuss and sharing the opinion to make the best decision. The EFL students also said that their collaboration with the EFL teacher and classmates become closer. Small group discussion method also impacts their self-efficacy by helping them increase their confidence. So do with their self-regulation and their motivation to learn English. The EFL students believe that method of SGD made them passionate to be the best group in the class so that they have to set a certain strategy with their group members. Somehow, this method still has the weakness during its implementation. The EFL students complaining about the passive member of the group and the noise make the learning activity no longer conducive.

Suggestions

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher knows the real condition and situation, the researcher has some suggestion, as follows:
1. For the EFL students, the EFL students should realize the importance of SGD as the method implemented by the EFL teacher. This method has so many positive impacts on the case to increase their engagement. Related to EFL students' engagement, they have to see in the positive way that every method that EFL teachers implemented must have some benefits for their process in learning English. EFL students have to increase their motivation to learn is they want to achieve their goals in learning English.
2. For the English EFL teacher, based on the EFL students' suggestions that have been elaborated on in chapter IV, the EFL teacher should keep the method of SGD considering all the positive impacts on the learning activity. But, to implementation of this method, the EFL teacher should be more friendly and humble in handling the class. Therefore, the weakness of the method of SGD could be reduced.
3. For future studies, the researcher suggests that future researchers should develop further research related to the EFL students' perceptions of the engagement of implementing methods of SGD in learning English. Since this study stress on perceptions, the future researcher can conduct a study about the SGD method implementation, group discussion method effectiveness, etc.

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