



**LEARNERS DIFFICULTIES IN GROUP WORK IN AN ESL
CLASSROOM**

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ABSTRACT

Research on effective approaches to language teaching is an on-going process. This study looks at a learner active classroom where students are encouraged to work as members of a team, sharing a common round table. The Malaysian English Language Syllabus for Secondary Schools recommend the use of group work in the language class. Thus, there is a dire need for teachers to understand the problems and difficulties that learners may face whilst carrying out group activities or task and at the same time, to help these learners overcome such language obstacles in the processes of both teaching and learning the English Language.

In this research classroom observations and questionnaires were used as the instruments to obtain data. The observations examined student- student/teacher – student interactions under five main headings: Whole Class Introduction, Group Task, Group Dynamics, Monitoring of Group Or Whole Class and Whole Class Wrap-Up. The questionnaire designed for the learners inquired into the learner's learning preferences and also probed learner's attitudes toward the use of group work in the ESL classroom. The questionnaire was divided into the following headings: Subject Matter, Interpersonal Skills, Decision Making Skills, Attitude Toward Method and Attitude Toward Group Work. The second questionnaire looked at the attitude of teachers toward the appropriacy of using group work in the ESL classroom. The data was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics and the results implied that even though learners faced certain difficulties in group work, there was a positive inclination from the learners toward the use of group work in the process of language learning.

There are some pedagogical implications from the findings of this research. The teaching implications in this study do not intend to be exhaustive but as a guide for teachers wishing to take this aspect of teaching.

ABSTRAK

Kajian mengenai pendekatan-pendekatan pengajaran bahasa yang efektif adalah satu proses berterusan. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada pelajar-pelajar yang bekerja sebagai ahli dalam satu kumpulan untuk mencapai satu matlamat pembelajaran yang sama. Sukatan Pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris untuk Sekolah Menengah di Malaysia (Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah) menggalakkan penggunaan kaedah kerja berkumpulan dalam kelas-kelas pengajaran Bahasa. Selaras dengan ini, adalah penting bagi guru-guru Bahasa untuk memahami serta mengatasi masalah-masalah yang timbul dalam proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris.

Dalam kajian ini, instrumen-instrumen yang digunakan untuk mendapatkan data adalah pemerhatian dalam kelas dan soal selidik. Pemerhatian mengkaji interaksi pelajar dan guru dari segi lima (5) tajuk – *Whole Class Introduction, Group Task, Group Dynamics, Monitoring of Group or Whole Class and Whole Class Wrap-up*. Soal selidik pelajar memberi tumpuan kepada aspek-aspek berikut – *Subject Matter, Interpersonal Skills, Decision Making Skills, Attitude Toward Method and Attitude Toward Group Work*. Soal selidik guru mengkaji pendapat guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris mengenai kesesuaian penggunaan kaedah kerja berkumpulan dalam kelas-kelas Bahasa Inggeris mereka. Data yang diperolehi di analisis secara deskriptif dan statistik inferensi digunakan. Keputusan dari kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa walaupun pelajar-pelajar menghadapi masalah semasa menjalankan kerja berkumpulan, namun mereka mempunyai sikap yang positif tentang penggunaan kaedah ini dalam proses pembelajaran bahasa.

Dapatan-dapatan daripada kajian ini menunjukkan beberapa implikasi dari segi pedagogi. Implikasi-implikasi dari segi pengajaran dalam kajian ini bukanlah secara menyeluruh tetapi boleh dijadikan sebagai panduan kepada guru-guru yang ingin mendalami penggunaan kaedah kerja berkumpulan dalam aspek pengajaran dan pembelajaran.

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