



Focus Group Discussion in Enhancing Students' Speaking Skill at SMAN 5 Barru

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted due to low speaking ability in English among students at SMAN 5 Barru. The researcher aimed to investigate the use of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to improve students' fluency and vocabulary at SMAN 5 Barru. This study used a pre-experimental quantitative design, where the FGD method was used to help improve students' speaking skills. The research procedure included a pre-test, treatment (FGD sessions), and a post-test. The sample in this study was the students of class XI MIA 1, selected from three classes as the population. A purposive sampling technique was used to choose the sample. The instrument used to collect data was a speaking test. The same speaking test was used in both the pre-test and post-test. Based on the results, the average pre-test score for fluency was 4.00, which increased to 53.85 in the post-test. The vocabulary score also improved from 35.38 in the pre-test to 61.54 in the post-test. These results show an improvement in both fluency and vocabulary after using the Focus Group Discussion method. Therefore, it can be concluded that the FGD method helped improve students' speaking skills at SMAN 5 Barru.

Keywords: Focus group discussion, speaking skills, fluency, vocabulary

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a fundamental skill that every individual must possess as a means of communication. According to Irawati (2014), speaking is the activity of producing speech in the form of words and sentences orally to communicate with others. It is a process of conveying information through interaction. In today's rapidly changing world, students are expected to remain actively engaged, particularly in the evolving educational environment, which demands more attention during the learning process. Sarah et al. (2016) defined speaking as the process of constructing and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols. Speaking involves not only linguistic competencies, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, but also sociolinguistic competencies, which include understanding when, why, and how to speak (Ilham, 2019).

In response to these challenges, teachers can apply a variety of methods to facilitate effective learning. Siregar (2018) emphasized that learning should be contextual and aligned with students' needs to help them improve their skills. One method proposed by Siregar is the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method. He stated that FGD is highly effective in today's educational context because it encourages contextual and interactive learning. Fadhilah et al. (2024) explained that the FGD method can take various forms, one of which is the single focus group model, where all participants are placed in one group to discuss a topic interactively. The FGD method is also widely used in data collection and information gathering, with a primary characteristic being strong participant interaction. Morgan (2012) noted that one of the strengths of focus groups is their capacity to include many participants, which encourages broader information sharing and initiates group interaction.

Based on the discussion above, the FGD method is well-suited for use in the learning process, particularly in enhancing students' speaking skills. In this context, speaking is understood as the ability to express opinions fluently and effectively by developing vocabulary and engaging in discussion.

2. METHODS

This research employed a pre-experimental design, as it does not meet the criteria of a true experiment due to the presence of external variables that may influence the dependent variable (Sugiyono, 2016). In this design, a pre-test is administered before the treatment is given, allowing for a more accurate assessment of the treatment's effects by comparing conditions before and after its application.



In this study, the researcher used spoken texts, observations, and mobile phones for recording purposes. To collect the data, a pre-test and post-test were administered. The pre-test was given before the application of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method, while the post-test was conducted afterward to measure any improvement in speaking skills.

The research procedure consisted of three main steps: pre-test, treatment (application of the FGD method), and post-test. Once the required data were collected, the next step was data analysis. The data were analyzed using quantitative methods, employing statistical procedures to process numerical data. The results were then tested using SPSS software to determine whether the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were statistically significant.

3. RESULTS

This chapter contains the research findings regarding the improvement in students' speaking abilities which include fluency in speaking and vocabulary. The results of students' improvement in fluency and vocabulary before and after the application of FGD are described below:

a) The Improvement of Fluency

In this section, the researcher observed that the Focus Group Discussion method helped improve students' English speaking skills, particularly their speaking fluency, at SMAN 5 Barru. The pre-test and post-test results can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Mean Score of Students' Speaking Fluency.

Aspect	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement (%)
Fluency	40.00	53.85	35%

There was also a noticeable improvement in students' speaking fluency after being given treatment using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method. As shown in Table 1, the average pre-test score for fluency was 40.00, while the post-test score increased to 53.85, resulting in a 35% improvement. This suggests that students' ability to express their opinions verbally improved after the application of the FGD method. The improvement in speaking fluency was measured based on students' performance in expressing their thoughts on assigned topics during the discussions. The difference in pre-test and post-test scores demonstrates that the FGD method effectively enhanced their fluency. This is supported by the consistent increase in students' performance after treatment.

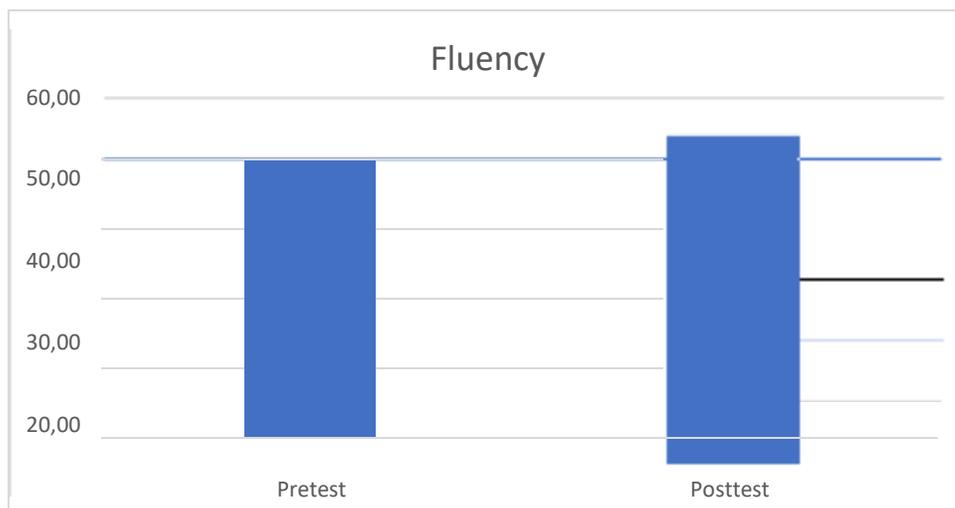


Figure 1. Mean fluency pre-test and post-test.



The results also show that the average value of the pre-test was 40.00 and the post-test was 53.85. This means that the post-test value is higher than the pre-test score ($53.85 > 40.00$).

b) The Improvement of Vocabulary

The improvement in students' vocabulary before and after the treatment using FGD can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Mean Score of Students' Vocabulary in the Pre-Test and Post-Test.

Criteria	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Improvement (%)
Vocabulary	35.38	61.54	74%

Based on Table 2, the average vocabulary score in the pre-test was 35.38, while the post-test score rose to 61.54, indicating a 74% improvement. This gain reflects the students' enhanced ability to use appropriate vocabulary while expressing their opinions. The pre-test vocabulary score (35.38) was based on students' initial performance before receiving instruction through the FGD method. The post-test score (61.54) reflects the students' vocabulary usage after participating in focused group discussions. The 74% improvement places this result in a "sufficient" category of effectiveness. These findings confirm that the FGD method helped students improve their vocabulary in speaking English.

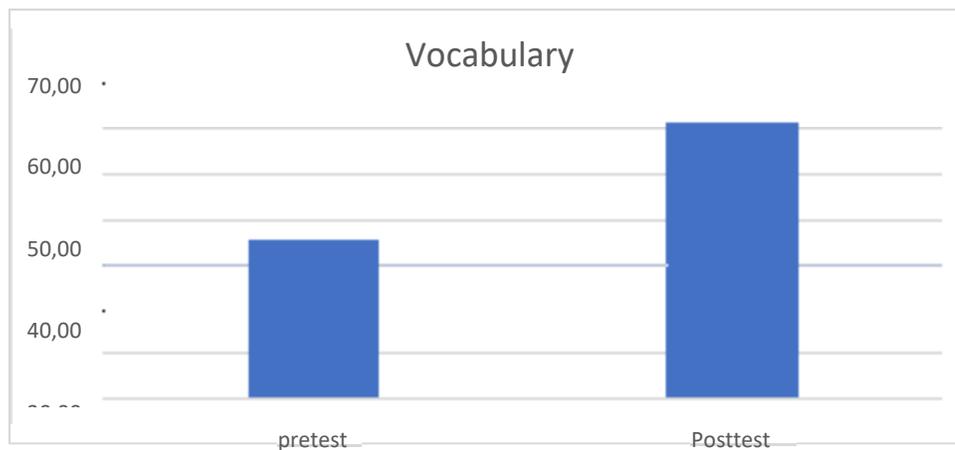


Figure 2. The Average Vocabulary Score on the Pre-test and Post-test.

Figure 2 shows that the average pre-test score of students is 35.38 and the post-test is 61.54 for the average score. This means that the post-test average value is higher than the pre-test ($61.54 > 35.38$).

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, the post-test average scores increased compared to the pre-test scores after students were taught using the Focus Group Discussion method. This improvement shows that the FGD method positively impacted students' ability to express their opinions fluently and accurately on a given topic. Van



Eeuwijk and Angehrn (2017) defined the Focus Group Discussion method as a systematic process of collecting data and information about a specific issue through structured group discussions. One of the indicators of success in this study was the improvement in students' speaking skills after receiving instruction through this method. Furthermore, Dos et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of learners paying attention to language accuracy and completeness when speaking, focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The findings of this study align with that perspective, as students showed improvements in both vocabulary and fluency. According to Hudson & Whisler (2001), contextual learning connects lesson content with real-life situations, helping motivate students and encouraging them to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. The FGD method provided such a context by allowing students to express opinions in a collaborative environment. This contributed to their increased confidence and reduced anxiety in using English. In other words, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores after the FGD method was applied. This suggests that the FGD method is effective in improving the speaking skills of Class XI MIA 1 students at SMAN 5 Barru.

5. CONCLUSION

This research focused on the application of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method in the learning process to improve students' English speaking skills. The method was chosen based on observations at SMAN 5 Barru, where students' English proficiency, particularly in speaking, was still lacking. Prior to this study, the use of structured discussion methods in English learning had not been implemented, resulting in limited opportunities for students to actively practice and express themselves in the language.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the FGD method effectively improved students' speaking skills, especially in terms of fluency and vocabulary use. This conclusion is supported by data showing that:

- The average fluency score increased from 40.00 (pre-test) to 53.85 (post-test), showing a 35% improvement.
- The average vocabulary score improved from 35.38 (pre-test) to 61.54 (post-test), indicating a 74% increase.

The research process involved initial observations, administering a pre-test, conducting FGD sessions where students were encouraged to express their opinions, and then a post-test to measure improvement. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the Focus Group Discussion method is an effective strategy for enhancing students' speaking skills in English, making them more confident and capable in expressing ideas with improved fluency and vocabulary.

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