

Seating arrangement in learning English: teachers' perception

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Abstract

Learning environment affects students' learning quality in the class. It needs teachers' ability to manage the seating arrangement. This research study aimed to describe the English teacher perception on setting arrangement and to find out obstacle faced by teachers when applying setting arrangement. This study employed descriptive study with a qualitative approach. The results of this study indicated that the perception of the English teacher on the seating arrangement pattern is very important. The class arrangement that has been applied is the seating pattern in the form of a separated table and solo work. With the aim that class conditions are fun and not monotonous. Obstacles that were often faced by the teachers; a) Student conditions, they often make noise when changed the seating arrangement pattern. Even, they were not only hard to manage but also protested to change; b) Classroom condition, a narrow room is also an inhibiting factor for the application of the seating arrangement pattern. Therefore, this research study is to encourage teachers to create the learning environment which affect to the students' learning quality.

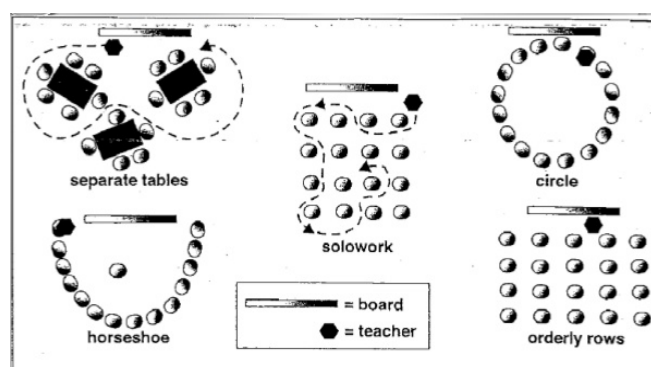
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INTRODUCTION

The learning process is an interaction process that involves two important elements namely the teacher and students. A good learning process supported by the relationship between teacher and students, this relationship can be seen from the many frequency of interactions during the learning process, and supported by a comfortable and pleasant learning environment.

Rutina (2016) states that the relationship between teacher and students as well as enjoyable learning all depending on classroom management conducted by the teachers.

Learning aims to provide assistance by teachers to students in the class (Helingo: 2021). That is the process of knowledge gaining, skill mastering and character building. Also, it is a process of attitudes forming. There are many factors to achieve those processes. One of them is learning environment. It is one of the most important aspects in an education environment where this process will determine whether the learning objectives are achieved. Most of learning activities were took place in the class. Therefore, teachers play a crucial factor to create a learning environment (Helingo: 2022). Because a good learning environment can improve the student of quality in learning in the classroom, this can occur depending on the ability of the teacher to manage the class well.



Picture 1.1 different of seating arrangement in class.

Classroom arrangement is an attempt at class structuring conducted by the teacher to create a conducive, comfortable and pleasant learning atmosphere for students. Jeremy Harmer (2007) explains that in effective classroom management, there are some number of things that must be considered these include how classroom space, where the students are working on their own or in groups and how we organize classroom time. So the teacher not only plays a role in the teaching process, but also plays a role in making classroom arrangements and creating a learning system that is fun and creative for students.

Seating arrangement is a classroom structuring strategy carried out by the teacher based on the situation and condition of the students. In structuring seating arrangement teachers need to pay attention to the conditions and learning targets to be achieved by the teacher, the teacher must also pay attention to the classroom situation and what is needed by students during the learning process. The teacher's success in arranging classrooms can be seen from the activeness of students during the learning process. the results of research conducted by Talib (2013), shows

that the educational statistics of students sitting in the front were significantly higher by 26.467 while those sitting in the rear were only 22,500.

Thus, seating arrangements are very important for every teacher especially in learning that is considered complicated to be understood by students. In this case the subject of English is one of the subjects that is considered the most difficult by every student (Hasan et al., 2019). so that in the process of learning English, building a comfortable learning situation is an obligation for every English teacher, two-way interaction between teachers and students is needed to increase self-confidence, learning motivation, participation and even an increase in student achievement in class.

However, teachers often complain of difficulties to manage or make class arrangements, for example classrooms in the form of seating arrangements in accordance with ongoing activities. which have an impact on the implementation of seating arrangement class. Based on an explanation from an English teacher that students' discipline is one of the inhibiting factors in making seating arrangements, some students do not want to change their seating positions due to several reasons including discomfort in sitting positions or unfamiliar classmates (Habibie, 2020). With having to adjust the conditions and position of objects in the classroom, the condition of a narrow class room and student chairs or tables that are not movable also become a serious problem in structuring student seating. Even, Rutina (2016) argues that paying attention to the attitudes and characteristics of students in the process of structuring seats in the classroom should be noted. It is undeniable that there are some students who are difficult to manage and do not want to listen to their teacher (Arsyad et al., 2021). In other situations, the English learning is one of the subjects that is considered very difficult. It is caused by the English as a foreign language.

Therefore, the research study of seating arrangement is needed. It is related to the learning environment which affect students in learning English. Furthermore, this study tries to probe the teachers' perception on seating arrangement. Because teachers are who create the arrangement in the class.

METHODS

The data collection method in this research used descriptive with qualitative approach. J.R Raco (2010) said that qualitative research method is a referring method to the general or overall line of thought (general logic) and theoretical ideas (theoretic perspectives). In this study the researcher intends to identify the teacher's perspective on seating arrangements, what

patterns are used by the teacher during the process of learning English, and how much influence the seating arrangements of students in the classroom.

This research conducted at Junior high schools in Gorontalo especially in Junior High School 1st Ponelo Island. To collect the data, the authors used a semi-structured interview. It aimed to explore teachers' perception of seating arrangement. Also, documentation is to obtain a clear picture of class conditions for considering seating arrangement. Two English teachers were purposively chosen as participants because they are the only English teachers in this research setting and because of their teaching experience by managing arrangement of seating. In the present research, the research data were analyzed using four main components of analysis. They are data collection, data reduction, display data, and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following are the results of the data from the teacher's perceptions related to the arrangement of the pattern of student seating arrangements in learning English in class.

1. Teacher perception of seating arrangement in learning English

a. Teachers' Understanding related to the Use of Seating Arrangement in Learning English

(1) Definition of seating arrangement pattern

The seating arrangement pattern is part of the strategy in the classroom arrangement made by the teacher to improve the quality of student learning and provide a pleasant learning experience especially in learning English in the classroom. This arrangement pattern is based on the determination of the teacher who acts as a facilitator with full responsibility in accommodating and creating a comfortable learning condition.

(2) The purpose or importance of the seating arrangement

The purpose of changing the pattern of student seating is to create an atmosphere of effective and comfortable learning, a comfortable environment that will have a positive impact on the ongoing teaching and learning process in the classroom. besides that, the change of seats is also to increase the closeness between one student and another so that student friendship is not monotonous to the same person.

(3) Things that must be considered in making seating arrangements

In making arrangements for the pattern of student seating, there are a number of things that need to be considered. The first is to understand the character of students, students with

shy and closed characters tend to feel comfortable if they are behind or at least in the middle and not in the front position so as not to feel pressured and disturbed while studying. the second is to understand the ability of each student, it is good in seating arrangements, the teacher not only changes the seat pattern but also changes the seatmates of the students themselves, students who tend to have weak abilities in English, are moved with students who have more abilities, this is done so that the expectation that each student can accept each other and have a positive influence on other students.

(4) Weaknesses and strengths of every seating arrangement pattern that has ever been applied

In this case, the authors obtained the same data from two sources namely both of teachers only applying two seating arrangement patterns. They are solowork and separatable. Here are the advantages and disadvantages to the patterns that have been applied:

a) Solowork

The strengths of solowork; the teacher can immediately assess and see students' abilities in understanding English material taught by the teacher. This is because, in the process of understanding and solving a problem in English students do it individually or without help from others.

Then, the weaknesses of solowork is; teachers will usually lose attention to students who sit behind, besides that students who sit behind usually cannot concentrate optimally because their focus is divided and feel not too noticed by the teacher.

b) Saparatable

the advantages of saparatable is to train students to work together in solving a problem, by putting aside their egos, students will tend to be accustomed to accepting and searching for solutions by way of deliberation.

Next, the weaknesses of saparatable; students who are considered the smartest in a group will naturally be given full responsibility by their peers to work on and solve problems in English, so that the teamwork expected by the teacher instead becomes individual work that gives positive impact for students who work and students who do not do it.

b. Teachers' Responses to Students Reaction after Changes in Seating Arrangement

(1) Reactions shown by students when changes to seating arrangements

There are differences in perceptions shown by two teachers who were the resource persons in this study:

The first resource person said that: Most students feel happy, this can be seen from the enthusiasm shown by students when the teacher instructs students to change their seat patterns, the students feel this seat change gives a new color in the English learning process so they do not protest or refuse when their seats are changed.

The second resource person said that: most students felt displeased, with the changes made by the teacher to their seating position, which was indicated by protesting and not wanting to move (Habibie, 2017), on the grounds that they did not want to have to separate from friends who are familiar with them or they are not familiar with friends who will sit side by side with them.

(2) The seat pattern most students like

In this case, the authors obtained the results of different perceptions from the two teachers. The first teachers said that the pattern of seating preferred by students is the circle but this pattern is rarely done given the classroom conditions that do not allow for its application. Besides, the second teacher said that the pattern most liked by the students was the separable pattern because they preferred to work together and exchange ideas in learning English.

(3) Effect of seating arrangement on student motivation

The pattern of seating arrangements gives a positive impact on students' motivation to learn English in this class, this can be seen from the changes shown by students including the tenacity in doing the assignments and the more attention shown to the presence of attendance during English learning in class.

(4) The effect of seating arrangements on participation

seating arrangements contribute to increasing student participation in class this can be seen from the activeness of students in raising questions related to material that is not understood, answering questions raised by the teacher as well as conveying objections related to things that are felt to disagree with things that have been raised by the teacher able to other students.

2. The teachers' constrain of applying seating arrangement pattern in learning English

a. Problems faced by the teacher when doing seating arrangements

(1) Room conditions

This problem is a problem that often inhibits teachers from changing seats, the condition of the room is not too large to be a major factor in this problem, for example, in the application

of circle patterns, this pattern is one of the patterns that require a large enough room, especially if there are many students. While this circular seating pattern is the pattern most preferred by students when learning English, in the end this pattern becomes difficult to apply in class.

(2) Student's condition

The first problem is that every student will change the pattern of seating students often make a fuss and noise in the classroom, both students who are happy with changes in position and students who are not happy always create a scene that ultimately disrupts the learning process of students in the next class.

The second is that students often protest against groups and colleagues who will be partners with their study partners, this protest action can even take up to 15 minutes just for seating arrangements, so that eventually learning time becomes less efficient.

b. Teachers' Assessment of the Proper seating arrangement when Learning English.

According to an English teacher in junior high school 1 Ponelo islands the most appropriate seating arrangement pattern is a separable with a U-shaped position, which is a group arrangement pattern where each student is divided into several groups according to the number of students in one class. Usually there are 24 students in our school, so the arrangements are 4-4 left and right, and 4-4 in the middle so each group consists of four people. With details of eight people on the left and right, and eight people in the middle.

The reason why this pattern is the right pattern, if it is adjusted to the existing material and curriculum, this pattern is a pattern with a perfect composition, where in almost every chapter of student practice exercises, it is required to work in pairs or groups. Besides that separable also trains students to work together in developing their abilities in learning English.

Discussion

Teachers' perceptions of the patterns of seating arrangements of students in the classroom are very good, this is indicated by the teacher's statement that the pattern of seating arrangements is part of a strategy in creating an effective and comfortable learning atmosphere, in line with Germmen (2016) revealed that the teacher has an important role in facilitate and create an effective learning environment and atmosphere. Despa (2020) also proves in his research that student seating can increase student learning motivation in thematic learning so that it can affect the increase in student learning outcomes.

As for some things that must be considered when making changes to student seating patterns according to the teacher's explanation namely the first is to understand the character of

students, students with shy and closed characters tend to feel comfortable if they are behind or at least in the middle and not in the front position so as not to feel depressed and disturbed while studying. the second is to understand the ability of each student, it is good in seating arrangements, the teacher not only changes the seat pattern but also changes the seatmates of the students themselves, students who tend to have weak abilities in English, are moved with students who have more abilities, this is done so that the expectation that each student can accept each other and have a positive influence on other students. Because seating can affect the quality of student learning (Istiqoma & Prihatmi, 2018).

The seating arrangement pattern is also based on the material requirements in the 2013 curriculum, if the material to be taught at that time instructs students to learn in groups the seating arrangement pattern to be applied is in the form of separable, according to Jeremy Harmer, Separate table, is a pattern of group sitting arrangement, this pattern is made by dividing students into several small groups. The teacher will divide students into small groups according to the number of students in the class. as well as other forms of instruction such as pairs or individuals which naturally follow the instructions to the required pattern. Istiqoma (2017) also adds that seating arrangements should provide student freedom to interact with each other so that it does not only focus on individuals to listen to the teacher in one direction and do the assignment individually and separately - separate. Because it is very contrary to the focus of learning English that seeks to improve student communication skills with each other.

Apart from the problems with the reactions shown by students, every English teacher revealed that changes in student seating patterns had a positive impact and influence on students' motivation, participation and achievement when learning English in class. this is marked by some positive improvements shown by students both in terms of activity, concentration, tenacity and attendance of students in class (Despa, 2020). the narrative above is then strengthened by the theory expressed by Roxanna Correa said that the differences in seating arrangements can effect interactions between students and increase student participation in classes in EFL lessons. This opinion was further strengthened by Careena's opinion (2010) who said that the location of student seating influenced the level of student motivation, this is marked by the desire of students to sit closer to the front of the class. So the researchers concluded that the position of seating arrangement is the most important thing in increasing motivation, participation, and student achievement in class, especially in learning English as a foreign language.

In this case the researcher formulates a thought based on understanding, research and conclusions that have been made, which can then be used as a solution to the problem when encountering the same problem in seating arrangements. In fact the problem that occurred at first stemmed from the lack of a preparation eye. A teacher in the pattern of seating arrangements must pay attention and prepare the most basic things. The teacher's understanding of class conditions, as well as the condition of students is an important point in making the pattern of seating arrangements in class.

This is in line with the theory put forward by Mcleod et al (2003), the teacher will be able to easily arrange seats in the classroom, make a plan by writing a list of notes or make a list of things that concern students and class conditions, and formulating what patterns are suitable for use during the learning process takes place. After making a list of the planned seating arrangement patterns, the teacher then provides an explanation and approach to students so that students understand the purpose of why changes to their seating patterns. This is important because it is in line with the teacher's statement that most students feel happy when their seats are changed, and do not protest because they understand well that the changes are made solely for the learning process to take place properly, and for the benefit of the students themselves. This explanation is very important to do between the teacher and students, in order to build close communication and trust in both.

CONCLUSIONS

Researchers found that the perception of the English teacher on the pattern of student seating arrangements turns out to be very important. The proof is that the teacher applies several patterns of seating arrangements when doing learning in class. However, its application the teacher experiences obstacles or constraints to apply it. That often become a problem in the application of this seating arrangement pattern, the problems faced include, among other things, student conditions and classroom environmental conditions, students often make a fuss and argue every time the teacher will change their seat patterns, which often disturbs or consumes learning time and even interferes with the teaching and learning process in the next class. Then, the relatively narrow class environment is also not infrequently a limiting factor in the application of this seating arrangement pattern.

Thus, the result of study can be considered by the English teachers on seating arrangement. Besides, this study suggests that further research be done regarding students'

perceptions of seating arrangement patterns in learning English, because that is a very important thing for the continued application of seating arrangement patterns in the classroom.

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