

THE DIFFERENCE OF THE ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITIES BETWEEN THE STUDENTS IN FRONT AND BACK ROWS OF SEATING POSITION IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

Teaching is a profession that requires specialized skills and knowledge to impact significantly on student learning. One factor associated with improved achievement among learners is the position at which they sit in a classroom. This means that where students sit in the classroom may affect their academic achievement. Many researchers believe that students who sit in the front tend to have higher scores compared to the ones who sit in the back. Because teachers tend to direct more questions to students seated in the front rows of the classroom. Students seated at the back interact more with each other, in a disruptive way, thus minimizing their opportunity to learn. Educators should pay attention more to the classroom seating position of the students in order to perform highly estimated teaching learning process. Consequently, seating position may give significant difference in helping students to get good quality of teaching learning process.

The aim of this research was to find out the significant difference of the achievements between students that sit in front and back rows. This study was focused to find out the difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities towards 2016 and 2017 academic year students of English Department IAIN Palangka Raya.

The method of this research was quantitative and ex post facto was the design of the research. The sample of the research was 2016 and 2017 academic year students of English Department at IAIN Palangka Raya consisting of 40 students taken by random sampling technique. The researcher used two kinds of instruments to collect the data of two variables. The instruments were questionnaire and speaking test. The first instrument was speaking test. Oral proficiency scoring categories from David P. Harris (1969) was used as guidance to measure students' speaking ability by conducting 'Introduction' as the topic. In analyzing the data. The second instrument was Students' Perception on ORSA (Orderly Rows Seating Arrangements) questionnaire sheet developed by Slamet Wahyudi (2010) which contains of 20 items with 5 point Likert-scale. This questionnaire used to find out students' seating position preference. The researcher measured the result of questionnaire and the result of speaking test by using Independent Sample Test.

The result of this research showed that the significance (2 tailed) is 0.000. It means $0.05 > 0.000$ which showed H_a accepted and H_o rejected. The result explained that there is significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between

students in front and back rows of in the classroom of English Department IAIN Palangka Raya.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a profession that requires specialized skills and knowledge to impact significantly on student learning. One factor associated with improved achievement among learners is the position at which they sit in a classroom. For example, several studies (Tagliacollo, Volpato, & Pereira Jr., 2010) have shown that those pupils who sit in the front tend to be more active and have higher achievement scores. These learners, therefore, have better interaction with teachers and gain more from each lesson than those who sit at the back of the classroom and are somewhat “hidden” from the teacher (Marx et al., 2006).

Available literature shows that students who sit near the chalkboard have better school performance compared to those who sit far away from the chalkboard (Benedict & Hoag, 2004; Perkins & Wieman, 2005). Teachers’ instructional space is near the chalkboard and hence those seated in the front are more likely to interact with their teachers. Seating at the back of the class has been associated with problem behavior as well as low grades (Perkins & Wieman, 2005). Earlier studies show that teachers tend to direct more questions to students seated in the front rows of the classroom. Students seated at the back interact more with each other, in a disruptive way, thus minimizing their opportunity to learn.

However, other studies found no detrimental effects of sitting at the back on learning achievement (see for example Kalinowski, & Taper, 2007). According to Tagliacollo et al. (2010), achievement has led teachers to move students closer to the chalkboard with a view toward raising their grades, but that outcome may not always be realized. Tagliacollo et al., (2010) posit that motivation to learn is the mediating factor between seat position and student academic achievement, and hence there exists no direct effect of seat position on student academic performance. Tagliacollo et al. concluded that students’ motivation to learn is the main determinant of seat position. This may not always be true, for instance, some teachers may assign students to seats regardless of student preference.

RELATED OF THE STUDY

First, the title is *The Influence of Classroom Seating Position on Student Learning Gains in Primary Schools in Kenya* by Moses Waithanji Ngware reported that seating in the front row has a positive and significant effect on learning achievement. The linkages between seating position and learner achievement have important implications for education policy and classroom practices in Kenya. Teachers can change classroom seating positions in a way that optimizes learning achievement for every learner since the seat position has the potential to improve achievement gains.

In particular, low performing learners can improve their grades by seating at the front rows especially in large class sizes. However, the teacher would have to monitor the progress of those seated away from the front rows, even if such students are high performers. That is, the teachers should pay attention to the different seating rows for the benefit of all students. Teacher preparation programs, both in-service and pre-service, and teacher employers need to emphasize more on classroom environment. This paper shows how our main explanatory variable predicts learning gains in schools that are different academically.

The next study is conducted by Kate Simmons (2015). The result of the analysis shows that a specific classroom seating position can contribute to students being on or off-task while completing independent work. In this study, three classroom seating positions were compared in a second-grade classroom.. Data were collected using three methods: observation/ anecdotal record, teacher behaviour checklist, and a behaviour tally sheet. The result by Kate Simmons students were sitting in the front row seating more active and more participate in doing the task.

Third, the title is Seating Position in English Learning: Does it really matter? By Melia Lestari, Gita Mutiara Hati and Alamsyah Harahap reported that the research findings failed to support previous studies which argue that seating position plays a very important role in improving students' achievement. On the contrary, the seating positions apparently do not contribute to the students' English achievement. Students sitting in the front row did not merely get higher scores compared to those sitting at the far back of the classroom. This research share similar results to the research conducted by Meeks et.al (2013) and Kalinowski & Taper (2007) which claim that students' performance was not significantly altered by seating location or seating type.

The next study is conducted by Victor Alberto Tagliacollo. The result of the analysis finds a significant association between students' position and both school performance and absence. Accordingly, students who sit far from the board had lower school performance and higher percentage of absence; the best performances (grade and presence) were more frequent for students who sit at the front position.

According to Parker, Hoopes, and Eggett (2011), there was a positive correlation between seating preference and students overall grade point average further distinguishing that motivated students prefer to be seated at the front of the class. This means that students that sit at the front of the class tend to have good academic achievement than students who sit at the back seat of the class.

Many previous research have shown that students sitting in the front more likely to achieve better scores and participates actively during the teaching and learning process. Minchen B. J (2007) in *The Effects of Classroom Seating on Students' Performance in a High School Science Setting*, believed that in traditional setting / orderly rows, the teacher usually stands in the front of the class, thus make the students in the front row get clearer vision and audio which leads to more understanding of the materials being discussed. In addition, there is the tendency of the teacher to point at students sitting in the front to do some tasks as well as to answer some question. This makes students sitting in the front feel obliged to be well prepared.

The next study is conducted by Griffith, Farnsworth, and subsequent researchers (2010). They got several explanations why their students preferred the seats near the front and center performed better academically in those seats than in other seats in other areas in the classroom). Students could give multiple answers, so these percentages do not equal 100%. The majority of subjects (68%) "just liked" the seats they checked and could not cite a specific reason. Thirty-five percent of students avoided the back and sides of the room because students in those locations were noisier and more inattentive. Front seats were avoided by 1% of students because of possible "spray" from the professors' mouths. Twenty-one percent claimed the front and center seat region was the point toward which the lecturer most frequently directed his attention.

METHOD

Research Design

This research used quantitative research. According to (Aliaga and Gunderson p. 12) Quantitative research is 'Explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics). In another definition according to (Muijs p. 2) quantitative research is essentially about collecting numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon.

This research used Ex Post Facto research. (Simon and Goes p. 19) stated that Ex Post Facto Research is ideal for conducting social research when it is not possible or acceptable to manipulate the characteristics of human participants. Ex post facto research design is often called as a causal comparative study, because the research tries to find information about the causal relationship of an event. According Emzir, (2013, p. 119) the study of causal comparative or ex post facto is a systematic empirical inquiry in which scientists do not control the independent variables directly because of the existence of these variables has occurred, or because these variables basically cannot be manipulated.

Subject of the Study

The sample for this study is all the students who sit in the front row and the back row in the classroom. Based on the above explanation, the research sample took as much as 25% of the 161 students. Then the sample counted 40 students. A total of 40 students were determined by a random sample technique.

Research Instrument

The instrument in this research was questionnaire and test. Questionnaire of seating position was used to know students' seating position preference and speaking test was used to measure students' speaking ability.

Data Collection Procedure

1. Determining The Problem of Research

The problem of the research intended to find out whether there was any significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom.

2. Determining The Population and Sample

The population of this research was 2016 and 2017 academic year students of English department of IAIN Palangka Raya because 2016 and 2017 academic year students already took enough English speaking class, since there are one speaking class for each semester.

3. Determining The Research Instrument

The instruments of this research were questionnaire and speaking test. A set of questionnaire consisted of 20 items of closed-question that was used to determine students' seating position. It was adopted from Slamet Wahyudi. In speaking test, the researcher conducted speaking test to get the score of students' speaking ability.

4. Administering the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 2016 and 2017 academic year students of English Education Study Program of Language Education Department of IAIN Palangka Raya via online message application (WhatsApp). The number of

questionnaire were 20 items. Each item had 5 alternatives answer, those were; strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

5. Conducted the Speaking Test

The students were asked to do a speaking performance by using ‘Introduction’ for the topic. They had to perform by themselves and it was recorded used cellphone. The researcher gave 5 minutes for their performances. The researcher asked an English teacher to give the scores of the speaking test. The English teacher as rater 1 and the researcher herself as rater 2. David P. Harris scoring rubric was used to measure the score.

6. Analyzing The Result of the Test

Independent Sample Test was used to find out the significant difference of the achievement in english speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom. The data was analyzed by using SPSS 21 and the hypothesis was analyzed at the significant level of students’ speaking ability between the students that sit in the front rows and back rows.

FINDINGS

Table: The Calculation of T-test Using SPSS Program (Independent Samples Test)

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Speaking Score	Equal variances assumed	3,949	,054	3,949	38	,000	11,500	2,912	5,604	17,396
	Equal variances not assumed			3,949	29,950	,000	11,500	2,912	5,552	17,448

The table showed that the result of t-test calculation using SPSS Program. To know the variance score of data, the formula can be seen as followed:

If $\alpha = 0.05 < \text{Sig}$, H_0 accepted and H_a rejected

If $\alpha = 0.05 > \text{Sig}$, H_a accepted and H_0 rejected

Since the result of front rows and back rows students had difference score of variance, it found that $\alpha = 0.05$ was higher than Sig. (2-tailed) or $(0.05 > 0.000)$ so that H_a was accepted and H_0 was rejected.

Thus, it can be concluded that there is significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is a discussion of the research findings by comparing the findings and the related researches. In relation to the result, the researcher would like to present discussion. Concerning one of the successful indicators in teaching learning process is the suitable seating arrangements, the researcher relates to the previous studies that have been discussed in Granstrom(2000), Harmer (2007), and Taglioacollo (2010). The study found that students who sit in the front tend to have higher scores compared to the ones who sit in the back.

As the researcher wrote at the first chapter, this research purposed to find out the significant difference of the achievement in english speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom of English Department at IAIN Palangka Raya. In learning a foreign language, English, it was important to practice or speak the new word that they know. By speaking the word or sentence, the learner will be helped in memorizing process. One of the successful indicator in teaching learning process of speaking class is seating position in the classroom.

In this discussion derived from the analysis of the findings. The analysis has been accomplished in order to answer the research problems. This part presents some points concerning in research design, collecting data method and analyzing data based on the result in findings in connection with the related literature.

In this study, the writer had conducting the data collecting. The data was collected by using two instruments. The first was speaking test, it was distributed to the students who had been selected before as a sample. In this technique, the students were asked to do a speaking performance by using '*Introduction: Al About Myself*' for the topic. The second instrument used was a questionnaire sheet that given to all students as participants in this research. They asked to fill the items of statement on the questionnaire. The questionnaire used to know the seating position preference.

Based on the calculation of Independent Sample T-test using SPSS Statistic program the result show that t test of significance two tailed is lower than alpha 0.05, to know whether front rows students, has better achievement in English speaking abilities, than students that sit in the back, it can be seen from the mean score of both group, mean score of students who sit in the front rows is (69.50) higher than the mean score of students that sit in the back rows (58.00).

It could be interpreted based on the result of calculation that H_a was stating there is significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom was accepted and H_o stating that there is no significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom was rejected.

As the writer explained before, if seating position may impact or influence in their speaking acquisition or their test. Horwitz, and Cope (1986) pointed out that, since speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning, the current emphasis on the development of communicative competence poses particularly great difficulties for the anxious student.

If we back to the theories and compare to the result that said there is a significant difference between students' seating position and their speaking performance, it was in line with the theory. In term of this research, the researcher conclude that if students that sit in the front rows, they will get better score in speaking test. And when student sit in the back rows, they wil get lower scores.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion was a basically asks us to do a few things: Restate the main idea of the paper (why you wrote this entire long piece to begin with). Summarize all the key points you made throughout the body of the paper (things that proved your thesis statement). The result of analysis showed that there was significant difference of the achievement in English speaking abilities between the students in front and back rows of seating position in the classroom. It can be seen from the means score between students that sit in the front rows and back rows. The mean score of front rows students is higher score than the mean score of back rows students. It indicated that the students seating position may give effect for the students to get good achievement in English speaking class.

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