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**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE USE
OF GROUP WORK ACTIVITIES IN ESL
CLASSROOM AT SMK PETRA JAYA**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Masters of Education in TESL

Faculty of Education

February 2008

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate teachers' perceptions on the use of group work teaching and learning in classrooms and to find out whether they perceived the implementation of group work in KBSM programme as feasible. It is also to examine problems faced by teachers in conducting group work activities and to identify these problems. The theory that lies in this study is based on Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" or ZPD which emphasizes that learning is, fundamentally, a socially mediated activity. A non-experimental research in the form of a survey was conducted to achieve the purpose. The study focuses on four perspectives which influence teachers' perceptions on the implementation of group work in an ESL classroom; the Group Structure, the Designated Time, the Amount of Material and the Level of Complexity. The subjects in the study were fourteen English teachers teaching English to the Transition, Form 1, Form 2, Form 3, Form 4 and Form 5 students in SMK Petra Jaya. All the subjects were asked to answer a questionnaire and be involved in an interview. Three observations in three different classes using group work strategy were also carried out for the data collection. Findings from the study showed that teachers do perceive group work strategy as feasible under the KBSM concept of Communicative Approach in language teaching and learning. However, some teachers are rather reluctant to use group work strategy regularly in classrooms due to the constraint of time, the big classes and other factors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This opening chapter aims to provide a brief insight of the study. The related issues which consequently generate the interest of the researcher to study closely of the problem identified are discussed in the background of the study. From here, the problem identified is stated in simple and precise statements. Next, the researcher generates research objectives and research questions based on the problem identified. The limitation and the significance of the study are also discussed briefly as supporting details to the statement of problem. To aid a more comprehensive understanding of the study, operational terms are identified and defined within the context of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Malaysian secondary school curriculum has come a long way since the country's independence in 1957. Amendments and modifications are done to ensure Malaysian learners are exposed to an integrated curriculum in order for the development of holistic individuals. The National Philosophy of Education (or the NPE, 1988) states that:

“Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large”. (National Philosophy of Education).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researches had been done to investigate the effectiveness of group work in classrooms. Batik, E (1999) in her unpublished dissertation discovers that although teachers are knowledgeable on the techniques of using group work strategy which had been introduced to them before KBSM was implemented in 1988, there are still doubts that it had been fully practiced in real classroom situations. These teachers were exposed to this teaching-learning method which had been introduced to them through courses conducted by the Ministry of Education. According to the teachers in her study, the teaching of writing skill is the worst skill to be conducted as a group work activity. This is because learners need to listen to more explanations and to see more examples from the teacher on how to write as they would not be able to learn from their peers due to complicated technicalities in writing techniques of different text types.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss the components in relation to the framework of study defined. The literature review of the study can be sub-categorized into 2 main bodies; namely the discussion of the learning theory and the discussion of the ESL methodology. Group work strategy is a teaching-learning strategy constructed based on the belief of social constructivism and the importance of communicative approach used in an ESL classroom. The researcher attempts to identify these main bodies of literature and the connections between them in order to construct a research framework which will act as a guideline for the study. This chapter ends with a brief discussion of the research framework identified by the researcher.