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IMPLEMENTING STUDENT-CENTERED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING WHEN TEACHING PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN AN ESL PRIMARY CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

The English language plays a crucial role in serving its purposes in various fields such as in the education system, business and economy because of its standard as an international language. Young English language learners often face difficulties in mastering the English language productive skills which are the speaking and writing skills. Therefore, English language educators often apply 21st century teaching styles aim to enhance learners' ESL language learning which include collaborative learning for young learners. This qualitative case study aims to explore Malaysian teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the student-centered collaborative learning in the teaching of productive skills namely the speaking and writing skills in a Malaysian ESL primary classroom. Specifically, the study focuses on how the ESL teachers implement collaborative learning, the effective ways of implementing collaborative learning as well as the challenges they encountered during the implementation of the student-centered collaborative learning. Document analysis, observation and interviews are employed as the research instruments. Findings revealed that assigning learners' roles, group evaluation, the application of differentiated instruction as well as assigning more language-based, personal-response and stylistic activities are the teachers' current practices in promoting the collaborative learning. This study found out the effective ways of implementing the collaborative learning are by assigning learners' roles, use of teaching aids, evaluation of the learning process and products as well as providing more language-based activities whereas classroom management is proven to be the main obstacle faced.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated on the implementation of collaborative learning on the teaching of ESL in a primary classroom. Previous studies have studied the use of collaborative learning on adult learners. Therefore, this study contributes to ESL teachers' competency in teaching young learners.

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language which is famously known for its international standard in the globalized world is one of the crucial necessities in language learning. Apart from being the language of communication among people, English is additionally influential in many fields as accordance to Muhammad, Muhammad, and Wahid (2019) human interaction depends mainly on a language as the medium of communication and even though various languages are being spoken in the globalized world, English is internationally acknowledged for interactions either

for personal or professional use. Al-Sobhi and Preece (2018) asserted that the English language which holds a powerful existence has made it to be the standard spoken language in the world. Consequently, the language has been considered to be essential and necessary to be positioned as one of the language learning in the education institutions due to its demanding value that offers numerous opportunities for individuals who manage to acquire them as an additional language besides their natives as well as for the purpose of understanding and gaining profits from various sectors. English language is important to master as it is a necessity for the business, entertainment, information technology and science sectors of the economy and its place as the international language of the Internet (Sidhu, Kaur, & Chi, 2018). The language which is widely known for being one of the mostly used language around the world because of its standard as an international language is important to be acquired by Malaysian learners in order to be competent and professional in the globalized world.

Perceiving from the Malaysian context, education in Malaysia has moved its way forward to the new development of teaching, assessment and learning. This is aligned with the hope of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to produce more competitive learners and at the same time to upgrade the quality of education in Malaysia (Hashim, Rusli, Hashim, & Hua, 2015). To better develop learners for the future, Malaysia's education system has been reformed in order to strengthen its quality mainly in the learning of English language. However, learning a second language does require a lot of efforts and crucial steps to be taken in teaching and learning as it is not a native language for Malaysians thus, learning English takes place with a great deal of challenges faced by English language learners. Nonetheless, such perceptions should not hinder the learners to gain knowledge of English as a second language (ESL) since various teaching and learning approaches have been introduced to cater to the problems. Therefore, the education institutions especially play important roles in executing the education system plans to enhance the teaching of English towards ESL learners. The teaching of English language in the Malaysian education curriculum comprises of different skills to be acquired namely listening, speaking, reading and writing that correlate together. Focusing on the productive skills namely the writing and speaking skills, Fareed and Bilal (2016) found that some major problems faced by ESL learners in writing skill involve insufficient linguistic proficiency, lack of vocabulary, lack of ideas, over reliance on L1 and weak structure organization. In terms of the speaking skill, learners inability to converse well in the target language hinders them from being a productive learner which could be due to learners' limited vocabulary and general knowledge as well as cultural factor of respecting teachers make them less interactive also contribute to challenges encountered by ESL teachers (Gunawardena, Sooriyampola, & Walisundara, 2017).

As the education is moving forward towards the 21st century learning, educators worldwide are moving from the conventional traditional teacher-centered approach to student-centered instruction (Muniandy & Shuib, 2016). This is because the student-centered learning promises to equip learners with the essential skills required for both learning environment as well as the reality in real world situations where those skills are to meet the demand of a workplace. Often be associated with active learning, student-centered learning extends learners' participation through working together throughout the journey of language learning. Learning responsibilities are shared simultaneously among the group members and learners' contributions are encouraged in order to achieve the same learning objectives. However, teaching learners through student-centered learning which are often beneficial for the learners can also be taxing and challenging for the educators to execute the plans due to numerous reasons. For student-centered collaborative learning to be well implemented, educators must first be well equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills of delivering the approaches in the classroom environment. Therefore, since most previous studies conducted are relevant to exploring the effectiveness of the collaborative learning in secondary and tertiary educations, this paper aims to enlighten readers on the effective ways and the challenges encountered concerning student-centered collaborative learning being implemented in teaching productive skills in the Malaysian primary ESL classrooms to provide insights for ESL learners as well as the educators on the student-centered learning environment for young learners.

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Halah and Patrick (2015) referred collaborative learning as a teaching and learning pedagogy that enhances the 21st century skills. Moreover, Halah and Patrick (2015) further defined collaborative learning as a teaching and learning strategy that divides learners into groups of various abilities and interest that will work together to produce an effect on learning results. It occurs through group work activities where different individuals work and be dependent on each other as they share the same goal therefore, if one of the group members is affected by an event, it will give impact to the whole group performance as well (Hay & Nilsson, 2016).

In ESL teaching and learning context, collaborative learning provides opportunities for learners to practice the English language and learn more effectively from classmates and teachers (Fekri, 2016). Collaborative learning approach can also be conducted through various ways and techniques such as giving group activities, pair work discussion as well as using diverse teaching materials. Alanís (2018) on the other hand showed that teachers apply visual and auditory scaffolding as well as paired learning activities among learners to develop and enhance collaborative learning. The findings on past studies show that teachers use numerous ways on applying the collaborative learning approach and also act as a guide to this study which seek to find out the effective ways used by teachers in implementing collaborative learning in the ESL classroom. However, it also brings unfavorable results as argued by Mahbib, Esa, Mohamad, and Mohd Salleh (2017) the great importance of the collaborative learning approach in teaching and learning does not necessarily mean it is working in every lesson as some teachers refuse to employ such approach due to behavioral management issue and the problem with lack of the learners' focus that they need to deal with. Mahbib et al. (2017) further added that only the low proficient learners will experience the conveniences and gain benefits from the collaborative learning. This finding is in correlation with Jamil and Paul (2016) study on the challenges of implementing collaborative learning namely learners' lack of the skills to work in groups, the classroom physical environment or the learners' seating arrangement, domination of individuals as well as free riding.

In traditional teaching method, teachers are the knowledge giver and instructor which resulted to learners being mostly passive in learning as they are only receiving knowledge and input from the teachers. Therefore, the learning environment is seen to be only a one way communication where the teachers are the ones who will be executing all the teaching and learning job and learners are only expected to receive and practice them individually. The shifting from the traditional method of teaching to modern teaching style focusses on the role of the teachers as the facilitators.

2.1. Challenges in Productive Skills

Past studies reported on many reasons of failure to master the ESL writing skill faced by learners. One of the reasons of the lack of writing skill is because of the learners' writing anxiety on ESL. Al-Zoubi (2019) explained that the insufficient knowledge on the target language is possible to be influenced by their anxiety and self-efficacy mainly in speaking and writing skills. This is agreed by Challob, Bakar, and Latif (2016) who stated that learners who own negative perception on the learning of writing skill are claimed to undergo a writing anxiety which is also familiar with the term 'writing apprehension'. Similarly, Elias, Akmaliah and Mahyuddin (2005, cited in Cole and Feng (2015)) agreed on how spelling and grammar errors resulted to learners' anxiety and frustration in learning the writing skill. The writing anxiety is caused by the stress level of the learners as they try to produce a write up that involves a lot of language ideas, syntax and sentence formations. Due to lack of practice and inconsistency of efforts, most ESL learners view writing as daunting tasks as they always struggle to perform.

Another ESL productive skill, speaking is the medium for people to produce words and send messages orally (As, 2016). Leong and Ahmadi (2017) referred speaking as the hardest aspect of language learning. Therefore, it requires a great amount of efforts and variety of teaching approaches to deal with the challenges. One of the challenges in the teaching and learning of the speaking skill is lack of self-confidence which is also mentioned in

Derakhshan (2015) study that emphasized on the importance of learners being confident in speaking as confident learners will engage more in communication and willing to speak using the target language. As confident learners are willing to be corrected and accept that making mistakes are a part of learning, learners who are less confident are mostly afraid of being laughed at for making mistakes in practicing the language which is also known as anxiety. Hülya and Kaya (2018) in their study on the learners' perceptions found that hesitation, shyness, no opportunity to engage in English conversation which refer to the language practice outside of the classroom and lack of self-confidence seem to be to be the important barriers that hinder them from performing well in ESL speaking skill. Therefore, these type of language learners tend to prefer other skill that does not require them to speak such as the writing skill or the auditory listening skill.

Moreover, the second language acquiring is crucial to be taught from young age in order to provide learners with early exposure of the target language. As CEFR being the new curriculum and framework for English educators to deliver during teaching and learning especially for Level 1 primary school, some issues arise for instance, the content of the textbook which does not really portray Malaysian scenarios makes it difficult for learners to absorb and comprehend. In order for the English language to be well delivered and implemented in the classroom, educators are urged to apply 21st century learning teaching styles through various approaches specifically collaborative learning which has been widely recognized in the education system due their benefits to the learners. Therefore, this study seeks to explore on Malaysian teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of one of the teaching approaches, the student-centered collaborative learning on the ESL productive skills of writing and speaking among the Malaysian primary learners.

2.2. Sociocultural Theory of Learning (SCT)

Sociocultural Theory of Learning (SCT) is integrated in this study as the theoretical framework. Learners' cognitive development develops as a result of social interaction among learners and teachers through classroom discussion. The inputs gain from the social discussion will be used for learners to complete learning tasks individually. The strong connection between the child and his family creates a scaffolding process that will increase their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Ahmed, 2017). ZPD refers to the ability of the learners to shift from accomplishing learning tasks collaboratively to independently after the assistance of scaffolding process. The scaffolding is defined as a process that offers temporary support to an individual (Wright, 2018). Learners themselves and the teachers play important roles in providing scaffolding through the collaborative learning in order for them to reach a higher level of language development. This shows that scaffolding in SCT is a continuous process given by more knowledgeable people towards learners. The purpose of selecting the Vygotsky's SCT is due to its relevance to this study that emphasizes on social interaction and providing guidance between learners, teachers and peers in completing a certain group task.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The qualitative case study is utilized to understand reasons or opinion and to provide profound insights into the topic. It was used to gain understanding on various ways and the effective ways on how the Malaysian ESL primary school teachers implement student-centered collaborative learning when teaching productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) in their classroom. Therefore, the research objectives are:

1. How do the Malaysian ESL primary school teachers implement student-centered collaborative learning when teaching productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) in their classroom?
2. What are the effective ways in which the Malaysian ESL primary school teachers implement student-centered collaborative learning when teaching productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) in their classroom?

3. What are the challenges of implementing student-centered collaborative learning when teaching productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing) in their classroom?

3.2. Setting

The study is conducted in a primary school which is situated in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia that is classified as an urban school and the learners enrolled come from different backgrounds with diverse proficiencies. The setting is chosen based on few criterion such as a primary school that focuses on the aims to explore the implementation of the student-centered collaborative learning for primary learners as well as the convenience and the accessibility for the researcher to contact the participants.

3.3. Participant

A purposive sampling is used as the participants selected were 5 ESL teachers that shared the same experience in implementing the student-centered collaborative learning in the primary school. Alvi (2016) stated that purposive sampling is used in the qualitative study when the researcher had set certain criterion that need to be met therefore, the sampling do not include everyone who is available for the study but only for those who meet the defined criterion. The participants are selected based on their main similarity which is all of them are assigned to the teaching of primary school ESL learners and share the same qualifications in teaching the English language. There are 5 Year 2 ESL teachers with 1 male and 4 female teachers with the ranging of age between 33 to 45 years old. All participants are Malays with the years of teaching experience ranging from 9 to 13 years and for the purpose of this study, the names of Mrs. Saleha, Mrs. Liza, Mrs. Hanim, Mrs. Mariana and Mr. Ramli are used as pseudonyms to conceal the participants' personal information.

3.4. Data Collection

Individual and focus group interviews were used as the primary data whereas the observation and document analysis are the secondary data that will assist to cross check and support the responses gain from the interviews. The semi-structured interview questions are drafted by the researcher as accordance to the research questions and validated by the experts in the field. Data collection started with the collection of relevant documents such as the participants' lesson plans, first classroom observation, individual interviews, second and third observations followed by the focus group interview.

3.5. Data Analysis and Procedure

The face-to-face interviews for both individual and focus group for every participant is audio recorded for the researcher to do an audio transcription and develop themes related to the research questions. Through the 3 months lesson plans, the researcher focused on the frequent occurrence of student-centered collaborative learning as well as the activities employed in the classroom. Three observations will be carried out per teacher and data gained from this study is analyzed through a thematic analysis and triangulation. Themes are drawn out to answer the research objectives. Through the triangulation method, data gained the accuracy and trustworthiness from the link between the findings of the interviews, observation and document analysis.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1 aims to find out the current practices of the Malaysian ESL teachers on the implementation of the student-centered collaborative learning. The study found out that each participant practiced different teaching style in terms of assigning learners' roles, evaluation method as well as the use of differentiated instruction. Data from document analysis, first classroom observation and the individual interview which aimed to

gain preliminary data showed that the participants rarely employed collaborative learning into the ESL teaching of productive skills however, when collaborative learning is employed, different patterns of tasks are observed.

4.1. Teaching Styles

4.1.1. Assigning Learners' Roles

Based on the individual interview, the triangulated data revealed the theme of teaching style where the participants vary their practices such as by assigning the ESL learners' roles. The excerpts from the participants' individual interview audio transcription are shown below:

"First, I'll assign them in groups. There will be a leader for each group." (Mrs. Saleha)

"For the leader, I will choose. Different tasks, different leaders. So all the pupils will have the experience to be a leader. So there will be collaboration." (Mrs. Liza)

During the first classroom observation, only two of the participants are observed to employ the practice of assigning roles to the learners. The lesson is observed to be more organized as each learner has own learning responsibilities. This findings support past studies who confirmed by assigning roles in the structure of a collaborative learning will help foster interdependence in a team, maintaining order and ensuring everyone involved (Gangel, 2016; Johnson & Johnson, 2018; Ott, Kephart, Stolle-McAllister, & LaCourse, 2018).

4.2. Group Evaluation

The participants also assess learners through group evaluation in order to evaluate their collaborative products. All participants are observed to assess learners through the group evaluation during the first classroom observation. The majority of the participants evaluate learners through observation and grouping marks. Mrs. Saleha specifically stated that observation is often used so she can easily spot learners progress and possibilities of passengers during the group work.

"Hmm.. from there I can see whether there's passengers or students who play a lot during the group work instead of helping the.. their friends." (Mrs. Saleha)

Another participant, Mrs. Mariana stated that grouping marks are used frequently to assess learners' group products. Mrs. Hanim also stated that grouping marks is used to evaluate learners' learning process and product.

"Both. For process, I want to know.. means while they are doing the activities, we want everyone to get involved. While the product, at the end of the lesson, at least we achieve one objective so we know that our lesson is efficient." (Mrs. Hanim)

4.3. Differentiated Instruction

Another practice found in teachers' current teaching style is the use of differentiated instruction. The researcher observed variety of tasks given to learners during the first classroom observation such as through the number of exercise and guidance given. The participants' lesson plans also noted the distinguished tasks assigned according to the learners' proficiency. Based on the individual interview, Mrs. Saleha, Mr. Ramli and Mrs. Hanim stated that sometimes they altered the group tasks for the learners based on their ability in order for the tasks to be simpler and doable. Mrs. Mariana on the other hand stated that every group will be assigned with the same level of tasks. However, the group assigned will be mixed in order to place the advanced and low proficiency learners in the same group. Mrs. Liza stated that different groups need to be created in order for learners to learn at their own capabilities. This findings support (Moreno, 2015) who stated that differentiated instruction can lessen or avoid class disturbance as learners are occupied with activities therefore, they will not accomplish the task too early while others are still in the process of completing the tasks.

"Hmm.. Actually for my class, I already put them in different groups. For example the remedial groups. The pupils who don't know the ABC alphabets, the slow learners in one group. So when I did the group work, this

group, the remedial group will get simple tasks. So they can do the work. If they are mixed with other pupils, they will only become the passengers [and] will not [be] doing anything." (Mrs. Liza)

4.4. Language-Based, Personal-Response and Stylistic Activities

The researcher also noticed the pattern of collaborative task given to learners which can be classified into language-based, personal response and stylistic activities. According to Siti, Mustapha, and Lebar (2014) activities can be classified into Language-based, Personal-Response and Stylistic activities. Language-Based involves group work, language activities such as puzzle, and performance activities. Brainstorming session and small group discussion about a topic are classified under Personal-Response activities whereas identify linguistic features from given text or pictures fall under Stylistic activity. Based on their lesson plans, the participants often assigned performance activities, class discussion, language games as well as identifying linguistic features for the learners to be completed in groups. Mrs. Liza and Mrs. Hanim first classroom observation for writing skill also engaged learners in solving puzzle and form simple sentences. According to Mrs. Hanim in the interview, she emphasized on the performance activities which encourage learners to speak in the target language.

> "Usually I'll ask them to discuss about a task and one or two pupils present. Sometimes I give them [the integration of] language arts. They do in their group and present for example like poem, action songs which will promote speaking skill as well." (Mrs. Hanim).

Research question 2 aims to find out the effective ways in which ESL primary school teachers implement student-centered collaborative learning when teaching productive skills. Using the same theme which is the teaching style, findings from the participants' document analysis, observation and interviews suggest assigning learners' roles, the use of teaching aids, evaluation on the learners' learning process and products as well as to employ more language-based activities are the effective ways to promote the collaborative learning when teaching ESL productive skills.

4.5. Teaching styles
4.5.1. Assigning Learners' Roles

Based on the participants' classroom observations, the participants assigned learners' roles and they were observed to be more responsible and committed in their group performance. Compared to the first observation in which some participants did not assign learners' roles, the young learners were a bit noisy and disturbed by peers who misbehaved as well as the presence of passengers. Some learners were also noticed playing around and disturbed other group members as they were not clear on the guidelines and less enforcement was given from the teachers. In contrast, the participants who divided roles at the beginning of the activities achieved more desirable result as each group was more organized and learners are enlightened on the roles and tasks they needed to accomplish. The participants' responses in individual and focus group interviews also indicated the use of learners' roles to enhance collaborative learning in learning productive skills. Mrs. Liza in her individual interview emphasized on the vital role of leaders in each group. To encourage leadership and cooperation skills, assigning learners' roles is important as stated by Mr. Ramli in the focus group interview.

> "For the leader, I will choose. Different tasks, different leaders." (Mrs. Liza)

> "A group leader is a must for each group and set the rules." (Mr. Ramli)

Therefore, by assigning learners' roles, it will increase active participation thus, enable collaborative learning to take place effectively as agreed by George (2017) assigning roles made them be more accountable for their learning and engage active participation.

4.6. The Use of Teaching Aids

Findings also revealed that the use of teaching aids such as visual pictures, charts, audios, worksheets and games bring benefits to enhance the collaborative learning. All participants make use of teaching aids such as picture cards, audios and games in the classroom observations which increase learners' participation. Mrs. Mariana, Mrs. Saleha and Mr. Ramli in the focus group interview stated that the use of teaching materials ensure the effectiveness of the collaborative learning. The use of reward chart can also attract learners towards the lesson. Mrs. Liza in her individual interview also confirmed the use of a reward chart as a useful tool in engaging learners into the lesson and increase their motivation which correlates with Seixas, Gomes, and De Melo Filho (2016) findings, students who received more rewards from the teacher got significantly better average performances.

> "Collaborative learning can be applied actually but teacher must be fully prepared with teaching aids and skills and ready for any outcomes in the classroom." (Mr. Ramli)
>
> "..teacher must use rewards to attract their attention." (Mrs. Mariana)

4.7. Evaluation of the Learning Process and Products

The first classroom observation noted that the participants focused more on the learners' products which resulted to only the advanced learners gaining the group marks. In Mrs. Mariana's individual interview, she preferred to focus on the process in which the learners complete the activities because the process is the phase where learners acquire skills and understanding. Mr. Ramli assess the learners based on the product as it determines the achievable learning objective. However, when the participants evaluate learners based on both the learning process and product, the classroom gained more active participation. This can be seen in the second classroom observation in which four of the participants evaluate the products but also paying attention to the learners' attitude during the learning process for instance, Mrs. Hanim's second classroom observation employed a roleplay activity to encourage each group members to participate in practicing their roles and dialogues given. She evaluated learners through observation based on their commitment in the group discussion as well as the efforts they put in practicing before performing. Therefore assessing learners based on both the learning process and product ensure the effectiveness and the quality of the collaborative learning.

4.8. The Use of Language-Based Activities

Another effective ways of implementing collaborative learning when teaching productive skills is to use more language-based activities. Findings showed that the participants employed more language game, Show and Tell presentation, Think Pair Share, dialogues and role play activities through collaborative learning to teach the ESL productive skills. Data from their lesson plans showed that dialogues, role play and group presentation are often assigned. Mrs. Hanim in her second classroom observation also employed role play as a language-based activity to enhance their speaking skill that gained a lot of active participation. Mrs. Liza and Mrs. Saleha in their individual interview stressed on the importance of language games as it is interesting for young learners and encourage participation. This is also agreed by Mr. Ramli in the focus group interview in which he highlights the importance of games in teaching young learners which can encourage individualistic learners to take part in the collaborative learning.

> "..I prefer to do something that involves competition or games. ..they will participate more.. it's interesting.. they will enjoy and at the same time they will learn." (Mrs. Liza)
>
> "For Year 2 I think we need to use lots of games or fun activities to attract them." (Mr. Ramli)

The third research objective aims to identify the challenges of implementing the collaborative learning when teaching ESL productive skills. The results from the interviews displayed that classroom management is the major obstacle which can be divided into number of learners and diverse learners. Mrs. Hanim in the interview noted that

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a great number of learners is a challenge for teachers to assign group work as it increases learners' misbehaviors and moves are also restricted. Learners also tend to get distracted and be passengers in the group.

> "..*hmm* I still use group work but *uh*.. I notice it's not suitable for a big group. *Uh*.. I mean when I assigned group, I only assign three in a group because when there are too many pupils in the group, they will tend to talk more." (Mrs. Hanim)

Based on the excerpt above, Mrs. Hanim explained that assigning too many members in a group will distract learners' attention to learning. This finding support (Dave, 2017) recommendation of assigning smaller groups of learners when implementing collaborative learning and also another study by Wang and Qiu (2016) who stated that classroom should provide barrier free learning space in order for cooperative learning to take place for different size group of learners.

Learners diverse learning styles also is the factor that cause the main obstacle. This is due to their preferences whereby some of them prefer individual tasks. Zuraina (2018) asserted that being individualistic restricts learners from performing collaboratively and eradicate the sense of togetherness. In addition, the level of tasks also determine the classroom environment as some learners tend to complete the activities swiftly without considering the quality as stated by Mr. Ramli in the interview. Most of the participants also agreed that the presence of passengers can be observed when teachers do not practice classroom management skills.

> "The challenges face nowadays pupils like to do their work *so* very fast in group and there's no quality at all from their works and from the show activity, sometimes they are shy and afraid to speak in English in front of the classroom." (Mr. Ramli).

> "..the passengers and some.. *hmm* a few inactive pupils from the low proficiency levels.. some pupils refuse to participate." [there are passengers, inactive pupils and pupils who refuse to participate in the activity] (Mrs. Saleha).

This is reflected in the second and third observations whereby learners tend to be noisy during the activities and there were passengers who were mostly the low proficiency learners. This is also aligned with their responses during the focus group interview where Mrs. Mariana and Mrs. Liza mentioned about the presence of passengers that interrupt the quality of the group work. However, during the third observation, participants managed to lessen the problems by practicing good classroom skills. Teachers must ensure effective learning by providing a positive classroom environment that will motivate learners thus, acquiring the productive skills better as agreed by Sieberer-Nagler (2016) the positive classroom climate plays a crucial role that determines learners' motivation towards learning.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study showed that the ESL teachers' perceive the implementation of collaborative learning positively in teaching productive skills to young learners. This is due to their current practices of assigning learners' roles, group evaluation, the application of differentiated instruction and assigning more language-based, personal-response and stylistic activities that are often employed in the lessons. Generally, the student-centered collaborative learning reflects Vygotsky's sociocultural theory that emphasizes on the role of social interaction and scaffolding in enhancing learners' learning performance. Therefore teachers need to have adequate knowledge and skill on implementing collaborative learning as accordance to Uzunboylu and Kinik (2018) who stated that teachers need on-the-job training program conducted by experts so that teachers can implement cooperative learning techniques effectively. This study is hoped to provide insights to ESL teachers on the various effective ways that can be employed to ensure effective collaborative learning when teaching productive skills for young learners.

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