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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to investigate how panel discussion is used as a teaching strategy and to identify the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy by MUET teachers to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills. The qualitative research design was selected to answer three research questions. The research employed three research instruments. The three research instruments are observation checklist, semi-structured interview and document analysis. Two MUET teachers were chosen by using purposive sampling. The research employed thematic and content data analysis investigating the teaching procedures and identifying the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy. The findings show three main themes and six sub-themes on how panel discussion was used as a teaching strategy. The three main themes are Pre-event Session, While-event Session and Post-event Session. The six sub-themes are Introduction to panel discussion, Selection of topics, Preparation, Presentation, Q&A session, and Closing remarks. The benefits indicated that panel discussions provide a comfortable learning environment and authentic learning environment for students. Panel discussions promote 21st century teaching and learning skills, enhances communication skills and creates contextualized learning environment. In addition, panel discussion is a holistic teaching strategy, and promotes independent learning. The challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy are panel discussions can be time-consuming, the issue of spontaneity and success rate of panel discussion depends on students' proficiency. The implication of this study suggested that panel discussion could be an alternative and effective teaching strategy.

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FAEDAH DAN CABARAN PENGGUNAAN PANEL PERBINCANGAN SEBAGAI STRATEGI PENGAJARAN DALAM KEMAHIRAN BERTUTUR BAHASA INGGERIS SELARI MUET CEFR

ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk menyelidik bagaimana panel perbincangan digunakan sebagai strategi pengajaran dan mengenal pasti faedah dan cabaran menggunakan panel perbincangan sebagai strategi pengajaran oleh guru MUET untuk mengajar kemahiran bertutur Bahasa Inggeris yang selari dengan MUET CEFR. Pendekatan kajian kualitatif digunakan bagi menjawab tiga persoalan kajian. Oleh itu, tiga instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah senarai semak pemantauan, temu bual separa berstruktur dan analisis dokumen. Sehubungan itu, dua orang guru MUET dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik pensampelan bertujuan. Justeru, data yang diperolehi dianalisis secara tematik dan analisis kandungan bagi menyiasat prosedur pengajaran dan mengenal pasti faedah serta cabaran menggunakan panel perbincangan sebagai strategi pengajaran. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan tiga tema dan enam sub-tema tentang penggunaan panel perbincangan sebagai strategi pengajaran. Tiga tema utama itu adalah Sesi Sebelum, Sesi Semasa dan Sesi Selepas. Manakala enam sub-tema adalah Pengenalan kepada Panel Perbincangan, Pilihan Topik, Persediaan, Pembentangan, Sesi Soal Jawab, dan Penutup. Oleh yang demikian, faedah yang dikenalpasti adalah panel perbincangan menyediakan suasana pembelajaran selesa dan suasana pembelajaran autentik kepada pelajar. Selain itu, panel perbincangan juga menggalakkan kemahiran pengajaran dan pembelajaran abad ke-21, meningkatkan kemahiran komunikasi dan mencipta suasana pembelajaran kontekstual. Tambahan pula, panel perbincangan adalah satu strategi pengajaran holistik, dan menggalakkan pembelajaran kendiri. Manakala cabaran dalam penggunaan panel perbincangan sebagai strategi pengajaran di mana panel perbincangan boleh memakan masa, mempunyai isu terhadap sifat spontan dan kadar kejayaan panel perbincangan adalah bergantung kepada kecekapan pelajar. Implikasi kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa kaedah panel perbincangan boleh dijadikan sebagai satu strategi pengajaran alternatif yang berkesan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
ESL	English as Second Language
MEC	Malaysian Education Council
MUET	Malaysian University English Test
TESL	Teaching of English as a Second Language
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides background information about panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers, the problem statement, research objectives and research questions that this research hopes to find out, conceptual and theoretical framework related to panel discussion as a teaching strategy, definition of terms that includes operational definitions, limitations of the study, significance of the study and lastly summary.

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1.1.1 Speaking Skill

The mastery of speaking skills is crucial in a competitive world. Proficient speakers of a language will be able to engage in meaningful conversations. Speaking can be defined as a transactional function that involves the ability to communicate and exchange meaningful communication (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). Hence, teachers have an important role to play in helping learners overcome their speaking difficulty.

Innovative teaching methods need to be implemented as advocated in the 21st century teaching and learning of speaking skills. Since speaking is a social activity, ESL teachers will have to use a variety of teaching methods such as group discussions, role-plays, debates to teach speaking skills (Rao, 2019). ESL teachers give importance to the teaching of speaking skills (Rao, 2019). Misbah, Mohamad, Yunus and Yaacob (2017) have highlighted the importance of creating a conducive and supportive learning environment for learners. Effective teaching strategies can help to promote learning.

Malaysian University English Test (MUET) is a test of English proficiency for admission to higher education. The test measures the ability of test-takers to listen, speak, read and write English in real situations in the education context (Malaysian Examination Council, 2019). MUET focuses on communicative language ability; which means test-takers must be able to use language in context. The speaking test has two tasks; Part 1- Individual presentation and Part 2- Group Discussion. The new MUET format has been aligned to CEFR in 2019 and the implementation of the new format will begin in 2021(MEC, 2019). CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) is an international standard used to assess language proficiency (Council of

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Europe, 2017). Students are classified into three specific groups; Basic Users (A1 & A2), Independent Users (B1 & B2) and Proficient Users (C1 & C2) (Council of Europe, 2017). As for the speaking test, the test descriptors involve production and interaction descriptions (MEC, 2019). The aggregated scores will be based on CEFR level bands. As for the speaking test, the band descriptors begin from A2 level (MEC, 2019). For the purpose of this study, the focus of teaching MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills will involve the interaction descriptors. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills will focus on the teaching of interactive skills that takes place in a discussion. Hence, this study aims to identify the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills by MUET teachers.

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1.2 Background of The Study

The MUET CEFR-aligned was introduced in the year 2021. (MEC, 2019). The new MUET format is aligned towards the implementation of CEFR. This change involves the assessment and new exam format for the four (4) basic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. As for speaking test, the primary purpose is to assess the ability of test-takers to give an oral presentation of ideas individually and to interact in small groups in both more formal and less formal academic context. (MEC, 2019).

The roles of ESL teachers are paramount in the teaching of speaking skills to ESL learners in the MUET CEFR-aligned context. ESL teachers use a variety of teaching methods in order for ESL learners to be able to communicate fluently in a

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natural setting (Rao, 2019). It is also important to take note that ESL teachers carry out activities that include a balance in fluency and accuracy activities. Since speaking is a social activity, ESL teachers use a variety of teaching methods such as the use of group discussions, role-plays, debates and panel discussions to teach speaking skills and enhance their speaking performance.

There are many teaching strategies employed by ESL teachers to teach speaking skills in the ESL context. One activity is role-play. One best way to improve learner's communicative ability is the use of role-plays in the ESL classroom (Rao, 2019). ESL teachers pair students to role-play their roles based on the topics given to them. Role-plays also promote 21st century learning whereby learners collaborate and cooperate in the speaking class (Pinatih, 2021). Learners learn to be critical and creative during role-play sessions. Learners also get the opportunity to use language in a stress-free situation. This situation leads to fun and enjoyment in the speaking classroom.

Other teaching strategies employed by ESL teachers are group discussions or group work. These teaching strategies are found to be a good way in facilitating communication (Khan, 2016). During group discussions, all group members get the opportunity to discuss the topic and share their opinions and experience through speaking. Collaborative learning approach such as pair work and group work enhance the learners' speaking skills (Rao, 2019). When ESL teachers conduct group work and pair work in the speaking classroom, learners become more confident because they learn to work in a social setting.

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Despite having so many teaching strategies, speaking skill is considered to be the most difficult skill to many ESL learners (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Many ESL learners lack the confidence to speak and choose not to participate in speaking activities conducted in ESL speaking classroom (Singh et al., 2020). MUET teachers' choice of teaching strategies can impact MUET students. As a result, in order to improve MUET students' communicative ability, MUET teachers need to adopt effective teaching strategies. One highly effective method is panel discussion. This highly effective method of active learning enhances critical thinking and students' communicative ability (Agarwal, Agarwal & Parashar, 2020).

Iraj and Mazyar (2020) define "panel discussion as a kind of discussion where members of a particular group talk or discuss a topic from a divergent perspective in front of audiences" (p: 445). Werdiningsih (2022) explains that panel discussion requires learners to have a deep understanding of the topic and be able to construct knowledge by gathering information and engaging in an in-depth learning. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills can impact students' learning experiences in a positive way.

The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy helps learners to develop their speaking skills. This idea is shared by Werdiningsih (2022) in which panel discussion help learners through "rhetorical skills, practice, discussing, debating, questioning and stating argumentation" (p: 275). Due to these criteria, panel discussion is a more suitable teaching strategy than role-play. Panel discussion enhances critical thinking (Agarwal et al., 2020). Students will have an opportunity to 'construct knowledge' (Werdiningsih, 2022) if students' are taught speaking skills using panel discussion. To

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construct knowledge is to interpret, synthesize, analyze and evaluate information in order to create new knowledge (Werdiningsih, 2022).

However, on search of literature, there were not many studies done on the use of panel discussion as a teaching learning method (Agarwal et al., 2020). Using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers can be considered to be a novel method. Although there is limited study on panel discussion as a teaching strategy, Agarwal et al. (2020) believe that panel discussion can be used to supplement routine teaching, having an add-on feature to routine teaching and be used as a regular teaching method. As a result, this research aims to investigate how panel discussion is used as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills by MUET teachers. Also, to identify the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills.

Students who wish to pursue their tertiary education at local public universities must sit for MUET since it is a mandatory test to gain entry into degree courses offered at all Malaysian public universities (MEC, 2019). Hence, MUET teachers shoulder the responsibility to teach and prepare students for the exam. By knowing and understanding the procedures of how to use panel discussion as a teaching strategy, the benefits and challenges that comes along when panel discussion is used as a teaching strategy can help the researcher to promote the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to other MUET teachers. Also, some practical solutions can be offered to overcome the challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy.

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1.3 Problem Statement

In Malaysia English language is taught as a second language to Malaysian students (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). Four language skills are taught to students; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking skill is considered to be the most important skill and second language learners need to master speaking skills as it is considered to be an important aspect in the learning of a second language (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Nunan, 1991). However, most ESL learners find speaking to be the most difficult skill to master (Muhammad, Azalina, & Melor, 2021). This leads to speaking anxiety, lack of self-confidence, lack of interest or enthusiasm to participate in speaking activities conducted in the classroom (Singh et al., 2020; Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). ESL learners in Malaysia face many challenges when they are learning how to speak in English. Malaysian students' lack of communication skills has become a national issue (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). There are some who have limited vocabulary. This also hampers their speaking ability.

Another common challenge ESL learners face is mother tongue interference (Kashinathan, & Aziz, 2019). ESL learners prefer to speak in their native language when they interact with one another. When ESL learners use more native language rather than English in their day- to- day interaction, then it becomes more difficult for ESL learners to master the English language. Within the school context, ESL learners often rely on translation to help them understand and produce utterances in English. Sometimes ESL learners do direct translation and this leads to misinterpretation and causes chaos in a learning context.

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Other speaking challenge includes the lack of exposure to the language (Singh et al., 2020). ESL learners were not given enough speaking opportunities in the classroom. Even during an English- speaking lesson, some ESL learners do not take the chance to use the language during the lesson. ESL learners need more practice sessions so that they can use the language confidently as the saying, “Practice makes perfect.” In addition, in a speaking lesson, time is an important factor. Due to time constraints, not all ESL learners have the opportunity to speak and this will lead to limited exposure to the language. The fact that only one student speaks at a time in a large class eventually leads to each student having little time to speak in a speaking lesson (Kashinathan, & Aziz, 2021). There are some who like to dominate and deprive others from speaking. This situation too leads to lack of exposure to the target language.

Other than ESL learners, ESL teachers too encounter many problems and hindrances when comes to teaching speaking to ESL learners. The new MUET -CEFR aligned assessment is still new to many ESL teachers. ESL teachers were not given proper training sessions on how to conduct the new format (Uri & Aziz, 2018). There are various scholars who have highlighted the importance of teachers’ knowledge and exposure to CEFR. One of the reasons stated by Chong & Hamidah (2021) is that teachers act as the mediator between the curriculum and the learners. In addition, Alsubaei (2016) pointed out that teachers’ knowledge and sufficient exposure to CEFR-aligned curriculum is important to establish the connection between learners, materials, teaching practice and assessments. Uri and Aziz (2018) highlighted that teachers’ limited knowledge, minimum exposure and low level of awareness about CEFR might hinder the smooth running of the whole implementation process. This issue can bring about serious implications to the teaching process and can affect teachers’ belief

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towards the implementation process. When teachers' belief is affected, the implementation of CEFR-aligned curriculum is hampered.

Another challenge faced by ESL teachers teaching MUET is that there are no textbooks available for the teaching of MUET CEFR-aligned. ESL teachers teaching MUET need to prepare their own teaching materials for the teaching and learning sessions in the classroom. This may also add to teachers' workload that would usually serve as a distraction from the actual process of teaching and learning of English (Rashid et al., 2017). Some teachers may be demotivated to teach as they do not have textbooks to rely on and guide teachers along the way. Textbooks are important to teachers and students as they serve many purposes. As far as teachers are concerned the use of textbooks is the most secure approach to be up-to-date with the CEFR syllabus. Also, the use of textbooks helps to save time and money as teachers do not have to spend hours of their precious time preparing teaching and learning aids. As a result, some teachers are not able to focus on teaching when they are demotivated and unhappy as they feel too exhausted preparing teaching aids especially when it is a big class.

According to the Malaysian Examination Council annual report for the year 2017, 68.28% of MUET candidates fall into the range of very limited to modest users (MEC, 2017). MUET candidates' low proficiency level can be linked to lack of confidence and hesitant to speak (MEC, 2017).

In addition, according to the Malaysian Examination Council annual report for the year 2021, a total of 25,989 candidates sat for MUET Session 1, a total of 54,285 candidates sat for MUET session 2 and 69,146 candidates for MUET session 3 (MEC,

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2021) The comments found in the Malaysian Examination Council annual report for the year 2021 was that 'some candidates did not have the ability to connect their responses to the task. Some candidates were not proficient therefore had the tendency to repeat the points. Some also lacked general knowledge and could not fulfill the requirement of the task'. Hence, roles of MUET teachers are imperative in the teaching of speaking skills. MUET teachers need to prepare lessons that can encourage MUET students to speak with more confidence. More innovative teaching strategies are needed so that students are well prepared for MUET.

Since the Malaysian Examination Council annual report for the year 2021 exhibited that some candidates were not proficient and lacked general knowledge, therefore, could not fulfill the requirement of the task, there is a need to adopt effective teaching strategies by MUET teachers in order to help students become more proficient. Panel discussion could be an alternative to solve learners' speaking issues (Werdiningsih, 2022). Panel discussion as a teaching strategy is an important area of enquiry, however, relatively little is known about panel discussion as a teaching strategy. As mentioned by Agarwal et al. (2020), on search of literature, there were not many studies done on the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy. However, the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy has been found to have a positive impact on learners (Werdiningsih, 2022). Panel discussion can be used as a teaching strategy as it enhances critical thinking skills (Agarwal et al., 2020).

Critical thinking skills are essential as MUET students need to make meaningful inferences in the speaking test (MEC, 2019). The ability to make inferences is one of the language functions that are assessed during the group discussion (MEC, 2019). For

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the purpose of this study, the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills is found to be relevant to teach speaking skills that needs to be mastered by test-takers for Part 2 of the test which is group discussion.

This research looks at how panel discussion can be used to teach specific speaking skills such as 'expressing opinions and giving reasons to support the opinion' during the panel discussion. The ability to express opinions and giving reasons to support one's opinion are one of the many language functions MUET CEFR-aligned test-takers will be assessed individually during the group discussion (MEC, 2019). Hence, this research is investigating how panel discussion is used as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills by focusing on the panel discussion implementation procedures in the MUET classroom by MUET teachers. The teaching of speaking skills is on language functions of expressing opinions and giving reasons during the group discussion task. Also, this research intends to identify the benefits and challenges of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills by MUET teachers.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are summarized as follows:

1. To investigate how panel discussion is used as a teaching strategy by MUET teachers to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills

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2. To identify the benefits of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy by MUET teachers to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills
3. To identify the challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy by MUET teachers to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the research questions to be answered are:

1. How do MUET teachers use panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills?
2. What are the benefits of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills?
3. What are the challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned English speaking skills?

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the foundation of a research problem. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) requires adults or peers to provide assistance to students who cannot complete the assigned task without help (Blake & Pope, 2008). Students work in groups within familiar cultural setting to complete task.

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Figure 1.1 shows the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach CEFR-aligned English speaking skills by two MUET teachers. The researcher also identifies the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach CEFR-aligned English speaking skill. Figure 1.1 explains the research design that is used in this research. The research participants are two MUET teachers teaching in Negeri Sembilan. The research instruments are observation using a checklist, semi-structured interview protocols and document analysis.

Finally, the data is obtained and analyzed using thematic analysis and content analysis. Hence, developing a conceptual framework is important as it helps to connect ideas so that all the main issues are covered during the completion of the research.

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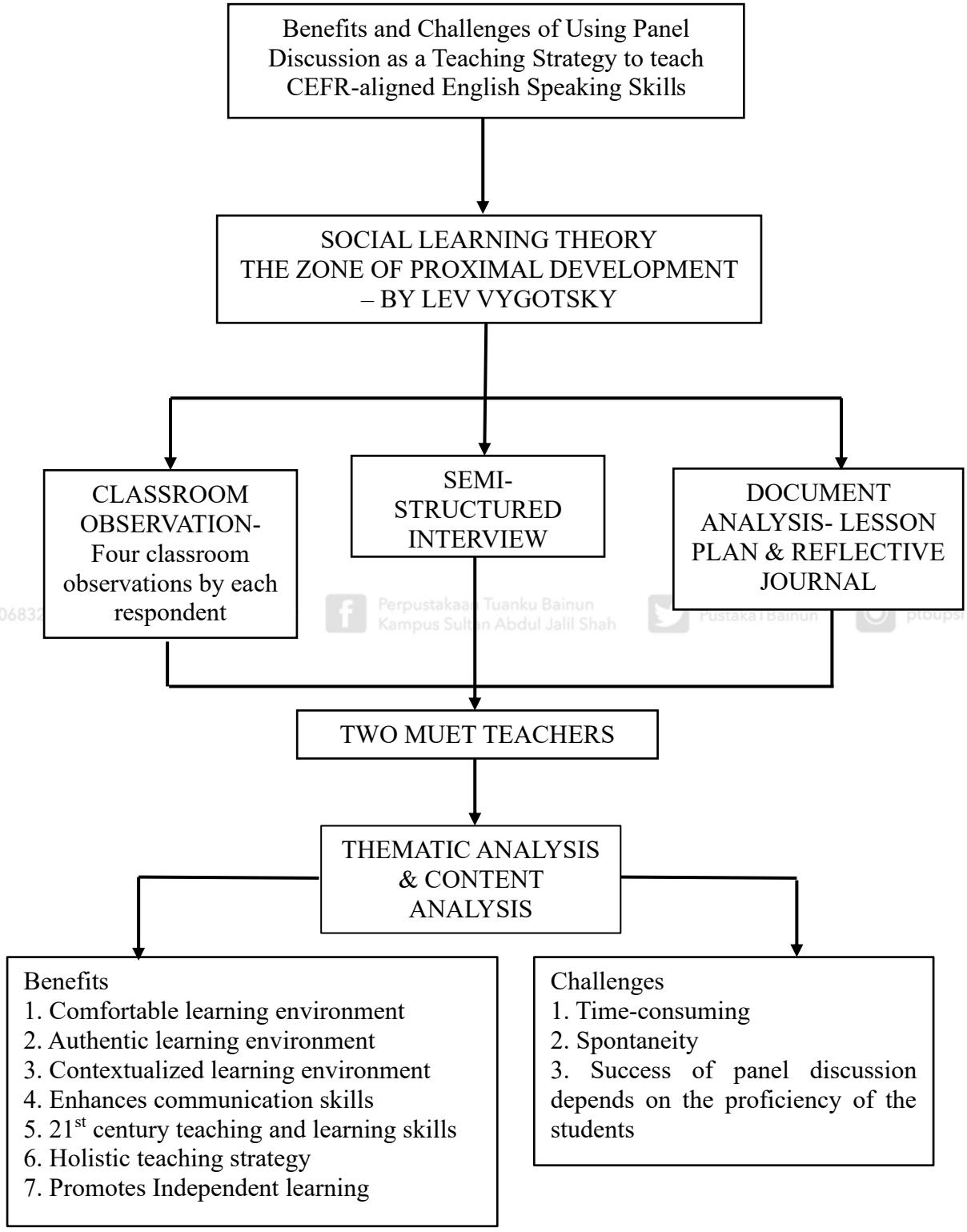
Figure 1.1

Conceptual framework



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1.7 Significance of The Study

This research is significant to MUET teachers since speaking is a difficult skill to many ESL learners (Kashinathan & Aziz, 2021). Some learners choose to be quiet than to speak due to the fear of being ridiculed by their classmates or friends (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). The importance of having a conducive and supportive learning environment is imperative (Misbah et al., 2017). The responsibility to create such stress-free learning environments falls on the MUET teachers. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers can help MUET students overcome their speaking issues as they collaborate in discussions.

This research will help MUET teachers become efficient teachers whose main concerns are their students. MUET teachers' selection of teaching strategies can help them become better teachers. The use of Collaborative Learning such as group discussions and panel discussions are some of the proposed teaching strategies that are in line with The Roadmap (Ministry of Education, 2015). These teaching and learning strategies promote 21st Century skills and student-centeredness. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers advocates collaborative learning through group work and discussions that provide support to students in the learning process.

This research is significant to MUET teachers as they use innovative teaching strategies to teach students. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills is an innovative method. It is a useful supplementary teaching method that has an add-on feature to traditional teaching (Agarwal et al., 2020). Samat, Muthu

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and Yunus (2019) found that creative and innovative teaching methods managed to improve students' speaking skills. Teaching strategies like panel discussions help teachers to conduct speaking lessons in a more interactive way.

1.8 Limitations of The Study

This research employs a qualitative research design. This research was conducted in two form six schools in Negeri Sembilan. The respondents for this research were two (2) MUET teachers teaching in Negeri Sembilan. Since the number of respondents for this research is very small therefore the findings of this research cannot be generalized to a bigger population. The findings of this research are only significant within the demographic context of the schools. The findings of this research are only relevant to the participating form six schools. Since other form six schools from Negeri Sembilan did not participate, therefore, these findings do not represent all the other non-participating form six schools from Negeri Sembilan.

Secondly the information obtained from both the MUET teachers on the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills is exclusive in nature. Both the respondents are from Negeri Sembilan. The respondents have more than seven years of teaching experience. The findings of this research on the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach MUET CEFR-aligned speaking skills are a representation of two form six schools only. The findings do not reflect a bigger population. Also, the responses and feedback from both the MUET teachers cannot be used to represent a different demographic context. For

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future research, a similar topic but in a different demographic context such as rural form six schools can be researched on.

1.9 Definition of Terms

1.9.1 Panel Discussion

Panel discussions are also known as forums, group discussions, discussion methods and symposiums. They may have some common values such as these discussions are conducted in small groups and present a sharing session. However, each discussion has unique characteristics. Iraj and Mazyar (2020) define, “panel discussion as a kind of discussion where members of a particular group talk or discuss a topic from a divergent perspective in front of audiences” (p. 445)

Panel discussion consists of 4 to 5 panel members who discuss a given topic based on expert knowledge or background knowledge in front of a live audience and there is a Q&A session at the end of the session.

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1.9.2 Teaching Strategy

Teaching strategy is a generalized plan for a lesson which includes structure, instructional objectives and an outline of planned tactics necessary to implement the strategies (Stone & Morris in Issac, 2010)

Teaching strategy is a teaching methodology that is used as a means to teach particular skills. Teaching strategy is used to create a conducive learning environment for the students so that learning becomes more meaningful.

1.9.3 MUET – an acronym for Malaysian University English Test

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MUET was first introduced in 1999 and is administered by the Malaysian Examination Council. Students who wish to pursue their tertiary education at local public universities must sit for MUET since it is a mandatory test to gain entry into degree courses offered at all Malaysian public universities (MEC, 2019)

MUET is a proficiency test that tests four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

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1.9.4 CEFR – Common European Framework of Reference

CEFR is an international standard used to assess language proficiency (Council of Europe, 2017). Students are classified under three (3) specific groups: Basic Users (A1 & A2), Independent Users (B1 & B2) and Proficient Users (C1 & C2).

1.9.5 MUET CEFR- aligned

The changes in the test specification involving Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing have been made in order to align MUET with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (MEC, 2019).

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1.9.6 Speaking Skills

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Speaking is the ability to interact in a meaningful context, the ability to convey the intended message so that the message is delivered and understood clearly by the receiver. Speaking skills in this research will look at the ability to ‘express opinions’and ‘give reasons’ to support opinion.

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1.10 Summary

This chapter highlights the speaking issues encountered by ESL learners. Speaking skill is an important skill. As second language learners, the mastery of speaking skills is essential to ESL learners. Since speaking skill is found to be the most difficult skill, it is imperative to help students to master the speaking skill. Teachers play a crucial role in the teaching of speaking skills. There is a need to provide supportive and conducive learning environment so that students can master speaking skills. Effective teaching strategy can encourage learners to master the speaking skills. One highly effective teaching strategy is the use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers. Panel discussion is highly recommended as it improves communicative ability. Since MUET focuses on communicative ability, it is important to adopt innovative teaching strategies to help students master the skill. Also, MUET CEFR-aligned speaking skill involves the assessment of production and interactive ability of the test-takers. There is a need to prepare students to sit for MUET. The use of panel discussion as a teaching strategy is found to be helpful to students as students are better prepared for the examination and are more confident to face examination (Agarwal et al., 2020). This research aims to identify the benefits and challenges of using panel discussion as a teaching strategy to teach speaking skills by MUET teachers.

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