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EFFECTIVENESS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION METHOD FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Mirza Zafarullah Farmayash[*1], Naghmana Batool[2], Muhammad Irshad[3]

[*1,2,3]Ph.D Scholar, Minhaj University Lahore

[*1]zafarullahbaig786@gmail.com; [2]naghmanasyeda@gmail.com; [3]muhammadirshad1989@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

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ABSTRACT

This experimental research examines the impact of Small Group Discussion (SGD) method on English language development among low and high achiever students compared to the Traditional Lecture Method (TLM). Thirty students each were assigned to control (TLM) and experimental (SGD) groups. Pre-tests were administered to assess baseline knowledge, followed by an intervention period where the experimental group received SGD instruction. Post-tests gauged improvement in language learning. Statistical analyses, including t-tests, compared pre- and post-test scores between groups. Results indicate SGD significantly enhances English language learning levels, particularly among low achievers, across learning, comprehension, and application domains. For high achievers, SGD demonstrates superior effectiveness in promoting advanced language proficiency. Findings underscore the efficacy of interactive and collaborative learning approaches in fostering language development and academic success. Recommendations include integrating SGD into curricula and providing professional development for teachers to optimize instructional strategies.

Key Words: Small Group Discussion, Traditional Lecture Method, English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

A key factor in the development of both individuals and communities is effective instruction. It inspires, encourages, and enables students to realize their greatest potential; it does more than just impart knowledge. A good teacher creates a welcoming environment in the classroom where students are inspired to investigate ideas, ask questions, and exercise critical thought. By accommodating a range of learning styles and skill levels, they guarantee that every student has the chance to succeed. Furthermore, good instruction imparts valuable life skills like cooperation, communication, and problem-solving in addition to academic information. In addition to imparting subject matter expertise, a competent teacher mentors and sets an example for students, assisting them in developing both intellectually and personally.

Good instruction has an impact that extends well beyond the classroom, changing people's lives and advancing civilization as a whole. Thus, it is essential to support and invest in good teaching methods in order to raise a future generation of learners who are knowledgeable, competent, and successful (Elgort, Smith, & Toland, 2008). Group discussion is considered the best way to learn creativity because small group talks are dynamic and participatory, they are a useful tool for language learning. Participating in conversations in small groups gives students lots of chances to practice speaking, listening, and understanding the language in a safe context. Interaction with peers allows language learners to receive important cultural insights and views in addition to improving their language proficiency (Felder, & Brent, 2001).

Additionally, small group talks foster cooperation and team spirit, motivating students to cooperate in achieving shared language learning objectives. Students break through communication barriers, gain confidence in expressing themselves in the target language, and increase their fluency by

actively participating in discussions. Furthermore, a more comprehensive approach to language acquisition is facilitated by peer criticism and the chance to examine various language styles and tactics. Small-group talks, therefore, provide a lively and captivating method of language learning that develops linguistic ability as well as international competency (Amabile, & Pratt, 2016).

One key learning objective for higher education courses is effective student engagement in group projects. Teachers found that group work helps students apply knowledge, even though many students believe they can complete assignments more quickly and alone than in a group. But just putting someone in a group doesn't guarantee that they will engage in critical thinking. As a result, the teacher needs to know how to create collaborative learning settings that work. Students believed that speaking English well showed they were proficient in the language when it came to English language instruction (Al Mahmud, 2022). Additionally, to become a proficient English speaker, one should carefully consider the following four factors: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation to aid in comprehension, and fluency to facilitate effective communication (Ariani, Maya, & Rachmawaty, 2021). Additionally, one of the roles that teachers have in teaching English is to give the students speaking exercises that would challenge them to talk more.

To help the students get better at speaking, the teacher can ask them to participate in group discussions and provide them with self-correction techniques through self-directed learning (Antoni, 2014). Further significant benefit that might result from group interaction is the chance for the teacher to offer an innovative learning environment. This method ought to have the power to alter students' perspectives on learning English and create a fun environment in the classroom. These suggest that teachers have an obligation to use effective teaching tactics to pique students' enthusiasm in learning to speak English. In this study, the researchers attempt to put into practice a small group discussion teaching technique for English speaking. It is one of the teaching methods for speaking since small group discussions allow students to talk for longer periods of time within the allotted time (Dodgson, 2017).

According to Eid, & Al-Jabri, (2016), "The students really benefited from the use of group strategy in small group discussions." When completing the exercises and debating the solutions, the students could impart their knowledge and opinions. Furthermore, the students were highly driven to construct sentences when the picture technique and the group method from the Small Group Discussion were combined. This study focused on using the Climbing Grammar Mountain game to enhance students' proficiency with the simple present tense; it is comparable to using small group discussions. It was a useful method of teaching structure and might inspire kids to compete with one another (Fan, & Cai, 2022).

Working in small groups allowed the students to benefit from one another's knowledge and gain greater experience speaking the target language. Putting what they had learned into practice gave them confidence and a sense of accomplishment. As a result, every group tried to earn the best grade. "A small group is a small member of human, work together through interaction whose interdependent relationship allows them to achieve a mutual goal (Huon, & Em, 2022). This implies that the pupils can collaborate to find solutions to their issues or they can respond to the teacher's questions. "Small group discussions could improve the student's speaking skill," says another expert. There are three reasons why small group discussions can help us become better communicators (Govindarajan, Rajaragupathy, Subramanian, Karthikeyan, 2021).

The purpose of the first conversation is to improve verbal communication between students and teachers in the classroom. Second, conversation is employed to foster deep interpersonal communication and education. Learning might take the form of procedures, skills, content, or attitudes. Thirdly, according to Rahmat, (2020), it assists students in assuming a more autonomous and responsible approach to learning. To put it another way, having small group discussions can improve communication between students and teachers and vice versa when it comes to learning how to speak English (Le, Janssen, & Wubbels, 2018).

Consequently, students sometimes find it difficult to relate a clinical condition to the underlying molecular concepts during their clinical training. A crucial part of the medical curriculum is instruction. Various teaching approaches include lectures, problem solving strategies, small group discussions, tutorials, and demonstrations. Group conversations are essential to medical education because they facilitate faster and more effective

learning for students. Lectures are typically used to train large classes of students. Teaching small groups of students will mostly involve demonstrations and bedside clinics (Malinin, 2019). It is not possible to address every student's issue in a lecture. A thorough small-group discussion incorporating questionnaires, a potential case, and relevant findings from biochemistry tests can review and strengthen the subjects covered in the lectures. By examining a case history with relevant biochemical and clinical data, students will have the ability to connect the biochemical principles they have studied in lectures to the case (Pakula, 2019).

In small groups, students can share their ideas first and then get input from their peers. There are various situations where lecturing can be combined with supplementary teaching methods. Lecture problems have also been noted by many academics, including low student preparation and a lack of metacognition. Additional drawbacks include a dearth of prompt feedback on students' understanding and little opportunity for active student engagement with the course material. Research from cognitive science indicates that knowledge acquired through activity is more useful than knowledge learned by memorization.

Group discussions are one of the teaching methods that can encourage students' creativity through sharing. Participating in a sharing group has been shown in numerous research to potentially improve the creative aspect. Since group interactions and/or classroom interactions may also be embedded in wider social networks, the connections made by students inside a group discussion can improve the quality of information received. When learning in an environment that encourages helpful interaction, students are more likely to form bonds with one another and share information and experiences. They thereby significantly improve their academic achievement (Terrell, Nickodem, Bates, Kersten, & Mernitz, 2021). Students need to understand that creating a cooperative culture will provide them the expertise and know-how to handle challenging situations and apply contingency learning for

It enables them to carry out creative transfer processes with success. Specifically, by strengthening their current knowledge and synthesizing new information in the future, students' ability to generate new knowledge can be improved thanks to the shared knowledge. By gaining knowledge that complements their explicit knowledge and hence fosters creativity, students can benefit from communal understanding.

Size of Group

One crucial aspect of group work is the dynamics of group size. Three or more people are typically seen as being in a small group. Groups of two people, are discouraged from working in groups since there aren't enough people in the group to foster creativity and a range of views. Groups consisting of four or five people are often thought to function the best. Three or four members are more suitable. Greater numbers of participants reduce the possibilities for individual participation and frequently lead to some members not actively participating in the group. That's why small groups of four students were made to conduct the study.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the learning of English between low achiever students who are taught through small group discussion method and traditional lecture method.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the learning of English between high achiever students who are taught through small group discussion method and traditional lecture method.

Methodology

The impacts of the small group discussion method on students' English language development were examined using experimental research. There were two groups in the study: thirty students in the control group and thirty students in the experimental group. The experimental group was given intervention i.e., small group discussion method and the control group was taught by using traditional lecture method.

First, a pre-test was given to each group to see what knowledge each has at baseline. The instructional intervention—which was small groups discussion method was given to the experimental group. Both the groups were given post-test following the intervention period to gauge any improvements in English language learning. Lastly, the impact of small group discussion method was assessed by comparing the pre- and post-test scores between the control and experimental groups using statistical analysis technique i.e., t-tests.

Data Analysis

Table 1.

Comparison of students' English language learning level in control and experimental group among low achiever students

	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Students' Learning	SGD	33	11.102	2.391	-9.871	.000
	TWB	33	4.911	1.231		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table presents a comparison of English language learning levels among low achiever students in both the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TWB) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. Low achiever students in the SGD group exhibit a significantly higher mean score of 11.102 compared to 4.911 for those in the TWB group. The t-value of -9.871 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .000 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is notably more effective in enhancing English language learning levels among low achievers. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly higher variability in scores. These findings underscore the potential of interactive and collaborative learning approaches, such as small group discussions, in improving English language proficiency among low achiever students, thus warranting further exploration and implementation in educational settings.

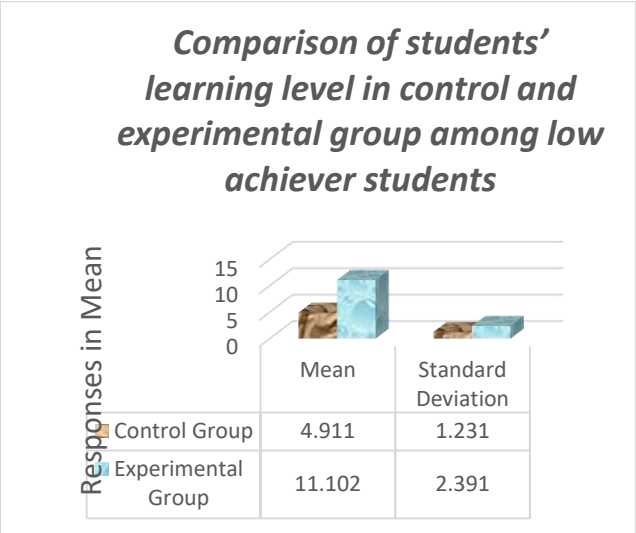

Figure I: ***Comparison of students' English language learning level in control and experimental group among low achiever students***

Table 2.

Comparison of students' knowledge level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Knowledge level Learning	SGD	33	6.352	1.656	-6.981	.132
	TLM	33	5.919	1.992		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the knowledge level of English language learning among low achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. The mean score for students in the SGD group is 6.352, slightly higher than the mean score of 5.919 for students in the TLM group. However, the t-value of -6.981 indicates a significant difference between the groups, while the p-value of .132 suggests this difference may not be statistically significant at conventional levels (e.g., $p < .05$). Both groups exhibit moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly lower variability in scores compared to the TLM group. Overall, although the mean score for the SGD group is higher, further analysis is needed to determine whether this difference is statistically significant in enhancing

knowledge level learning among low achiever students compared to the traditional lecture method.

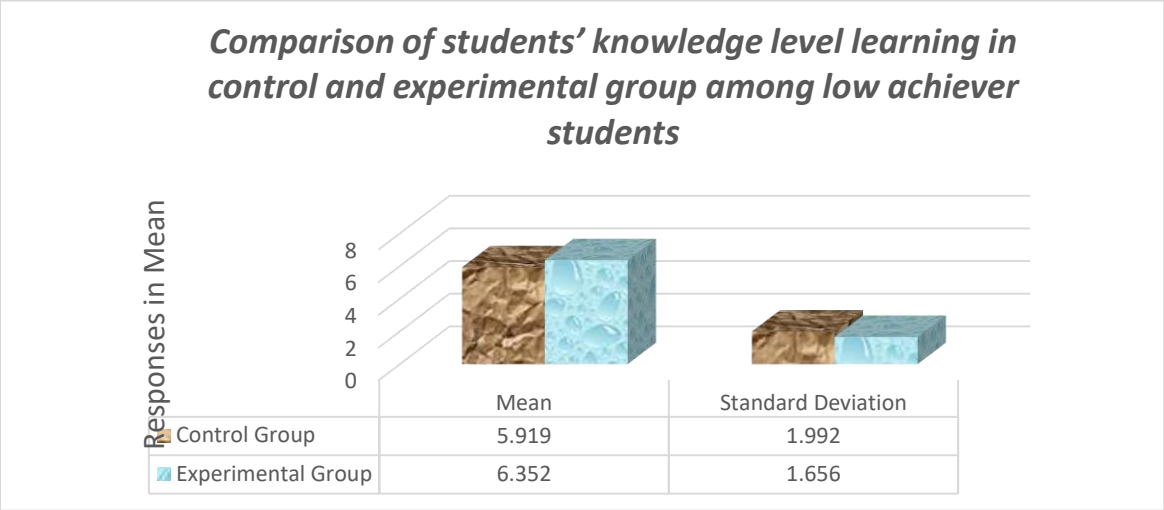

Figure II: ***Comparison of students' knowledge level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students***

Table 3.
Comparison of students' comprehension level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Comprehension level Learning	SGD	33	7.223	1.323	-7.342	.003
	TLM	33	5.445	1.564		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the comprehension level of English language learning among low achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. The mean score for students in the SGD group is significantly higher at 7.223 compared to 5.445 for students in the TLM group. The t-value of -7.342 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .003 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is more effective in enhancing comprehension level learning compared to the Traditional Lecture Method. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly lower variability in scores. These results emphasize the potential of interactive and collaborative learning methods, such as small group discussions, in fostering deeper understanding and comprehension of English language materials among low achiever students.

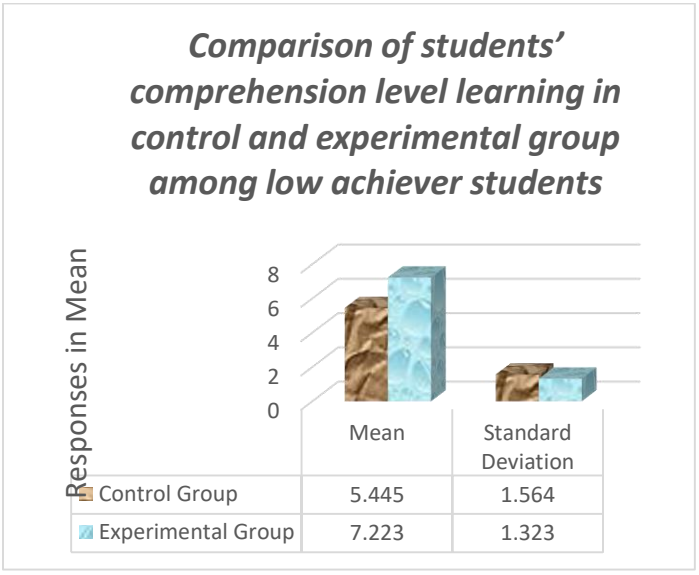

Figure III: *Comparison of students' comprehension level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students*

Table 4.
Comparison of students' application-level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Application-level Learning	SGD	33	5.331	1.553	-7.913	.001
	TLM	33	3.434	1.391		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the application-level English language learning among low achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. Low achiever students in the SGD group demonstrate a significantly higher mean score of 5.331 compared to 3.434 for students in the TLM group. The t-value of -7.913 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .001 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is more effective in fostering application-level learning compared to the Traditional Lecture Method. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly higher variability in scores. These findings highlight the efficacy of interactive and collaborative learning approaches, such as small group discussions, in promoting the practical application of English language skills among low achiever students, which is crucial for real-world language proficiency.

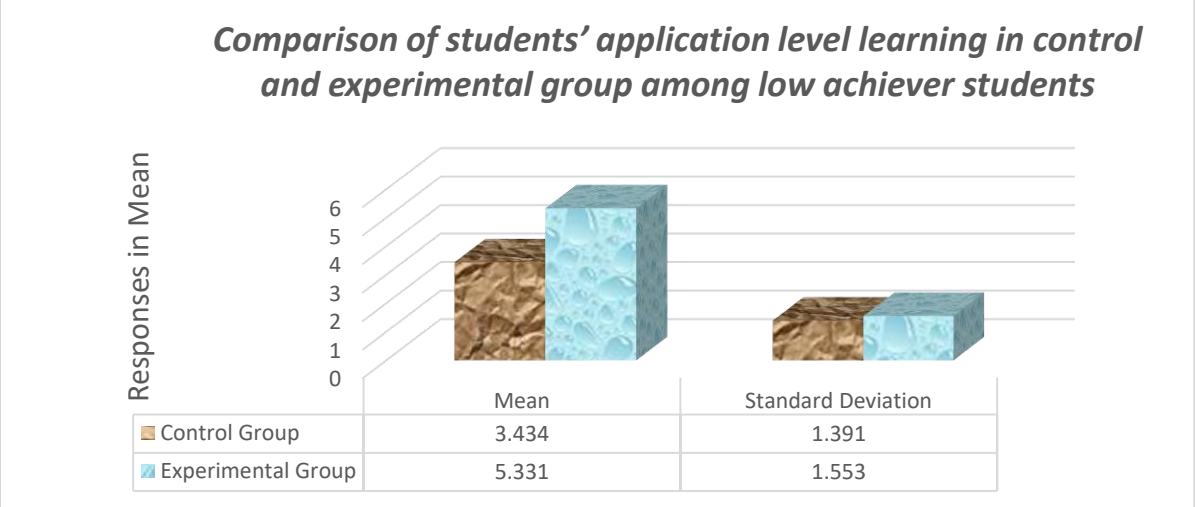

Figure IV: ***Comparison of students' application level English language learning in control and experimental group among low achiever students***

Table 5.
Comparison of students' English language learning level in control and experimental group among high achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Students' Learning	SGD	33	23.569	4.231	-9.891	.000
	TLM	33	12.118	2.109		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the English language learning levels among high achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. High achiever students in the SGD group exhibit a significantly higher mean score of 23.569 compared to 12.118 for those in the TLM group. The t-value of -9.891 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .000 confirms this significance, demonstrating that the Small Group Discussion method is highly effective in enhancing English language learning levels among high achievers. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly higher variability in scores. These results underscore the efficacy of interactive and collaborative learning approaches, such as small group discussions, in promoting advanced language proficiency among high achiever students, contributing to their academic success and language development.

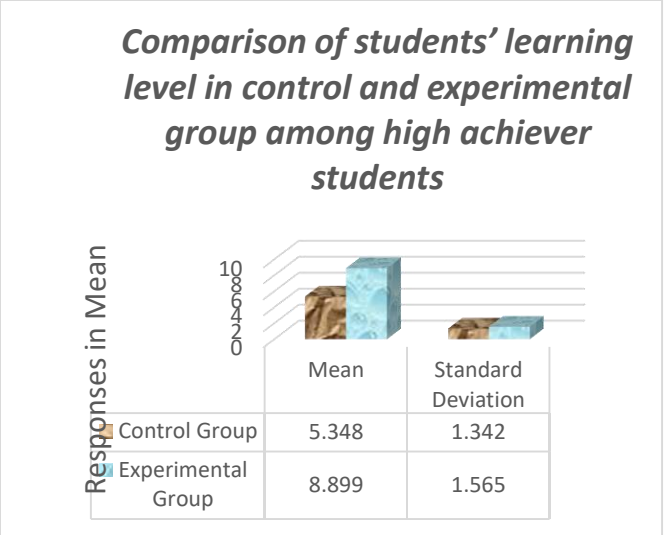

Figure V: ***Comparison of students' English language learning level in control and experimental group among high achiever students***

Table 6.
Comparison of students' knowledge level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Knowledge level Learning	SGD	33	8.892	1.566	-7.097	.000
	TLM	33	4.992	1.887		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the knowledge level of English language learning among high achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. High achiever students in the SGD group demonstrate a significantly higher mean score of 8.892 compared to 4.992 for those in the TLM group. The t-value of -7.097 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .000 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is highly effective in enhancing knowledge level learning among high achievers. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly lower variability in scores. These results emphasize the potency of interactive and collaborative learning strategies, such as small group discussions, in fostering a deeper understanding and retention of English language knowledge among high achiever students, ultimately contributing to their academic excellence and language proficiency.

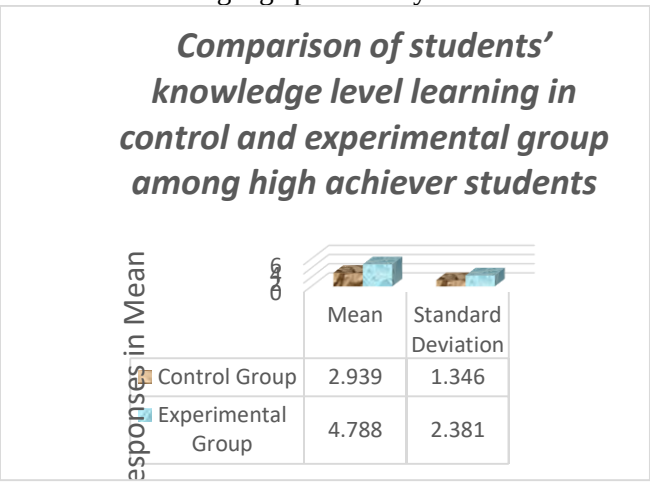

Figure VI: ***Comparison of students' knowledge level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students***

Table 7.
Comparison of students' comprehension level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Comprehension level Learning	SGD	33	9.010	1.981	-8.983	.000
	TLM	33	4.923	1.341		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the comprehension level of English language learning among high achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. High achiever students in the SGD group exhibit a significantly higher mean score of 9.010 compared to 4.923 for those in the TLM group. The t-value of -8.983 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .000 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is highly effective in enhancing comprehension level learning among high achievers. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly higher variability in scores. These findings underscore the effectiveness of interactive and collaborative learning approaches, such as small group discussions, in promoting deep understanding and interpretation of English language materials among high achiever students, fostering their language proficiency and academic success.

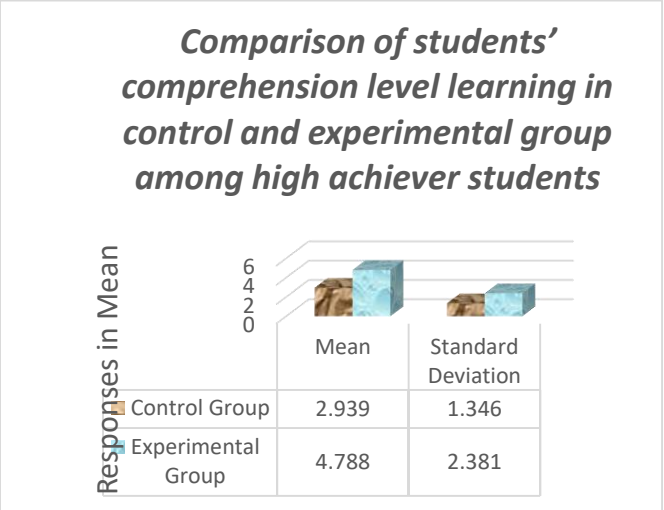

Figure VII: ***Comparison of students' comprehension level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students***

Table 8.
Comparison of students' application-level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students

Learning Level	Students	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	*p.*
Application-level Learning	SGD	33	7.539	1.871	-7.718	.002
	TLM	33	4.918	1.981		

*SGD = Small Group Discussion, *TLM = Traditional Lecture Method

The t-test table compares the application-level English language learning among high achiever students in the control (Traditional Lecture Method, TLM) and experimental (Small Group Discussion, SGD) groups. High achiever students in the SGD group demonstrate a significantly higher mean score of 7.539 compared to 4.918 for those in the TLM group. The t-value of -7.718 indicates a substantial difference between the groups, and the p-value of .002 confirms this significance, suggesting that the Small Group Discussion method is highly effective in fostering application-level learning among high achievers. Both groups display moderate standard deviations, with the SGD group showing slightly higher variability in scores. These results highlight the efficacy of interactive and collaborative learning strategies, such as small group discussions, in promoting the practical application of English language skills among high achiever students, which

is essential for their real-world language proficiency and academic success.

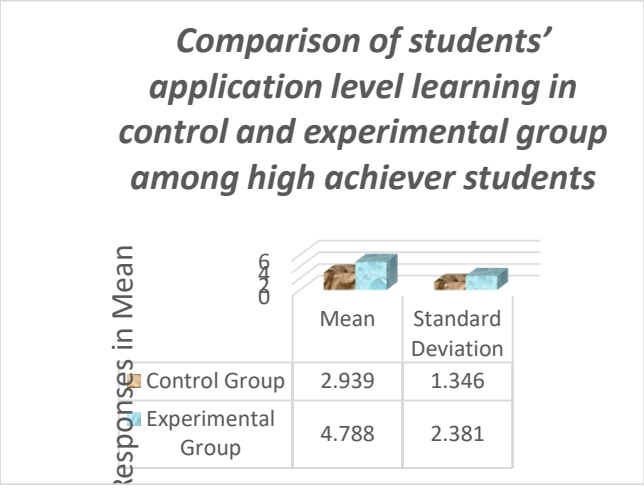

Figure VIII: ***Comparison of students' application-level English language learning in control and experimental group among high achiever students***

Main Findings:

1. Small Group Discussion (SGD) method is significantly more effective in enhancing English language learning levels among low achiever students compared to the Traditional Lecture Method (TLM).
2. The SGD method yields higher mean scores in all aspects of English language learning levels (learning, knowledge, comprehension, and application) among low achiever students.
3. In terms of knowledge level learning, although the mean score for the SGD group is higher, further analysis is needed to determine statistical significance compared to the TLM.
4. Small Group Discussion method is significantly more effective in fostering comprehension level learning among low achiever students compared to the Traditional Lecture Method.
5. For application-level learning, the SGD method significantly outperforms the TLM in enhancing practical application of English language skills among low achiever students.
6. Among high achiever students, the SGD method is highly effective in enhancing English language learning levels across all aspects (learning, knowledge, comprehension, and application) compared to the TLM.
7. High achiever students in the SGD group consistently exhibit significantly higher mean scores in all aspects of English language learning levels compared to those in the TLM group.
8. The efficacy of interactive and collaborative learning strategies, such as small group discussions, is highlighted in promoting advanced language proficiency and academic success among both low and high achiever students.

Recommendations:

- ✓ The significant effectiveness of SGD in enhancing learning outcomes suggests its potential as a preferred instructional strategy. Teachers could incorporate regular small group discussions into their lesson plans to promote active engagement, collaboration, and deeper understanding of language concepts.
- ✓ Training sessions could cover methods for structuring discussions, managing group dynamics, and providing targeted feedback to enhance language learning outcomes. Equipping teachers with the skills and resources necessary to implement SGD successfully can maximize its benefits for students.
- ✓ Educators should design differentiated instruction plans that challenge high achievers to deepen their understanding and application of English language skills beyond standard curricular requirements. This could involve advanced reading materials, extended writing assignments, or project-based learning opportunities that foster creativity and critical thinking in language acquisition.

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