

## **EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Classroom Seating Arrangements**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to determine the seating arrangement of teachers and the reasons for their seating preferences. This study was carried out at SMK Negeri 8 Bekasi, with three English teachers serving as research subjects. This study's instruments were observations and interviews. According to the study's findings, the seating arrangement that supports students demonstrates things like comfort, flexibility in carrying out activities, completing assignments, spaciousness, and cooperation with teachers. As a result, students are supported in terms of concentration, participation in class discussions, and collaboration with teachers in order to improve student performance.

**Keywords:** Teachers beliefs, Seating arrangement, Student performance

### **INTRODUCTION**

The seating arrangement technique is one of the classroom management techniques to consider. It is possible to accomplish this by arranging the tables and chairs (McCorskey & McVetta, 1978). The traditional seating arrangement or row-seating is the most basic seating arrangement technique that is commonly used in the classroom. The teacher is confronted with the question of how to place the student's sitting position so students can understand the lesson material well. Class management is one part of this. There are still many teachers who consider this. Many students have spent time in the classroom and sat in the chair determined by the teacher. Determining where students sit is an important thing for a teacher to do at the beginning of the school year. This helps students to adapt to class situations and conditions and helps students to socialize with other students. The classroom's physical condition can influence learning and teachers' and students' attitudes toward school (Denton 1992). Although, teachers still have uncertain reasons for considering the student's sitting position. This knowledge can assist teachers in making decisions to consider the results of more effective seating research so that teachers can choose the right method for their students. (McKeown et al. 2015). As

a result, it will be able to encourage students to improve their educational and social skills (Van Den Berg et al. 2012; Wannarka and Ruhl 2008).

Making the most of classroom time to develop the teaching-learning process is a trait of effective teachers (Emmer & Sabornie, 2014; Kauchak & Eggen, 1993; Sprick, 2013). According to Stevenson and Stiggler (1999), a teacher can follow a few key suggestions to minimize interference or unnecessary interruptions in his teaching time, such as: a. prepare the class ahead of time; bring all necessary materials and have them ready for the students' arrival. b. Have established routines with their students in advance, such as having books ready on their desks at the start of class or entering the classroom and being quiet quickly to begin class. c. Set aside time for parent-teacher conferences so that they do not disrupt the classroom. d. Consider having students present while students work on a hands-on activity in class so that the first few minutes of the class's attention are not wasted on administrative tasks such as taking student calls or handing in homework. Students are engaged and immersed in learning when teachers make good use of their allotted time, academic performance improves, and classroom behavior and management improve (Freiberg & Lapointe, 2013; Kauchak and Eggen, 1993; Manning and Bucher, 2013). As a result, it's critical to remember that time management in the classroom should allow students to combine group activities with individual and pair activities. Furthermore, the class schedule should alternate periods of noisy activity with periods of quieter activity so that students do not become exhausted or bored, which can lead to destructive behavior (Schickedanz et al., 1996).

This research focuses on several aspects, starting from class management, namely the existence of student seating arrangements in the classroom. This research contributes to the importance of physical structures in classrooms that function for social and academic students (Gest and Rodkin 201 Van Den Berg et al. 2012). Therefore, the authors are interested in researching and analyzing EFL teachers' beliefs about classroom seating arrangements.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

This study uses qualitative research to determine teacher beliefs of seating arrangements in English Classroom. In this study, researchers used narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is based on the assumption to understand life through narrative (Bruner,1990). According to James Schreiber and Kimberly Asner-Self(2011), is the study of people's lives as told through their experiences, including a discussion of what those experiences mean to them.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

This study was conducted from teacher in Vocational High School 8 Kota Bekasi. The participants in this research were 3 teachers of Vocational High School. The

researchers consider several reasons for choosing Vocational High School teacher as study participants, such as: How Vocational High School teachers arrange the seat positions of their students so that students can receive maximum English learning and get maximum result in the learning process, so makes it easy for researchers to conduct this research.

### Data Analysis

The researcher used a semi-structured interview and observation to this study. In-depth narrative interviews were used to obtain stories related to teachers' beliefs about students' seats. Researchers conducted interviews with a duration of 10-20 minutes. Cross-case analysis technique was used to break down the stories' complexity into manageable themes and subthemes.

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The data of the research on the 'EFL Teachers' Beliefs of Classroom Seating Arrangement was collected using observation, interview, and documentation as the data collection instrument. There were three issues with the statements that needed to be addressed in this research. The first issue was the state of Vocational High Schools in Bekasi. The second question concerned the English teacher's perceptions of EFL classroom seating arrangements. The third question is how the seating arrangement affects student performance in English learning. The data for this study were gathered through observation, interviews, field notes, and documentation. The observation was used to collect data on the effect of EFL classroom seating arrangement on student performance in learning English. The interview was used to collect information from teachers about their attitudes toward EFL classroom seating arrangements. To support the observation data, a field note was used, as well as documentation. Here, an interview was applied to analyze the data. The following table illustrates below.

**Table 1. The Results of the Observations**

Observation Items	1		2		3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
The class implements a traditional seating arrangement.	✓		✓		✓	
The students sit in the same seat in each class session.	✓		✓		✓	
The students look tired in following the lesson.	✓		✓		✓	
The students are responsive during the instruction.			✓			✓
The students do activities that are not related to the lesson.	✓		✓		✓	
The students do interaction with their friends while sitting in their seats.	✓		✓		✓	

The students do discussion actively with their friends.	✓		✓	✓
The students have a disruption in following the lessons while sitting in their seats.		✓	✓	✓
The students' seats are spacious enough for them to do their works easier.	✓		✓	✓
The students save their stuff in their desks easily.		✓	✓	✓
The student(s) swaps their seat positions with their friend during the instruction.		✓	✓	✓
The teacher gives attention to all students.		✓	✓	✓
The seat enables a variety of classroom activities	✓		✓	✓
The students show active participation during the instruction.		✓	✓	✓
The students' seat positions support the students to do their tasks easily.	✓		✓	✓

The same results were obtained in the second and third observations based on data analysis. Three items on the first observation checklist differed from those on the second and third checklists. The items were numbered 3, 8, and 10. (see table 1).

In addition, the seating arrangement was observed during an interview with the teachers. Table 2 shows the result.

*Table 2. The Result of the Interview*

Question	
What do you know about classroom seating arrangements?	Almost all teachers knew about seating arrangements.
What do you think about classroom seating arrangements?	The teachers argue that seating arrangements in the classroom are very effective. He also stated that the size of the class, whether large or small, influenced the use of classroom seating arrangements.
What kind seating arrangement that you mostly used?	Rows is the teacher's choice most often used in seating arrangements.
What type of seating arrangement you mostly kind like?	All teachers interviewed by the writer frequently use the seating arrangement in their classes. Rows and U-shape seating arrangements were the two most common types of seating arrangements used by them.
How does the teacher solve the problem of arranging the seats?	By returning the seating arrangement in accordance with the class and material to be taught.
Do the students enjoy when you are applied the classroom seating arrangement?	All students always enjoy when teacher apply seating arrangements in their classrooms.
Does the seating arrangement have a significant affect toward student performance?	All of the teachers interviewed by the writer agree that the seating arrangement has an impact on student performance. Students will participate more actively in class and will be more focused on receiving lessons. Furthermore, by using the seating arrangement, students will be assigned a new seat, which forces them to socialize with friends who are nearby, which is one of the benefits of using the seating arrangement.
How do you maximize student learning with seating arrangements?	Learning will be maximized for all teachers by arranging student seats.

Based on the results of the two instruments mentioned above, namely the observation checklist and interview guidelines, the results of the conventional sitting arrangement are thoroughly explained.

Students are assigned seats in the classroom based on the results of the two instruments. Furthermore, during English lesson, the class solely uses the traditional type of sitting arrangement. According to the interview results, the teacher stated that the seats were placed in rows.

Xi et al. (2017) discovered similar results, as did Nomali, Sanagoo, Sarayloo, and Jouybari (2019). According to the findings, classic seating arrangements are very popular among students. It is most commonly used in big classes that emphasize teacher-centered instruction. When learning is based on a teacher-centered and material-oriented learning approach, pupils readily accept this.

In terms of student seating arrangements, the statistics demonstrate that all students always sit in the same chair while learning. According to the instrument data, all students sat in the same chair throughout the class session, and none of them changed their sitting position until the end of the class. It is also linked to the eleventh item, in which students do not switch sitting postures. In contrast, according to the findings of Nomali, Sanagoo, Sarayloo, and Jouybari (2019), the majority of pupils switched seats in the classroom.

When the students were arranged in rows, they were able to sit comfortably in their seats. According to the data, the students were glad to sit in their preferred seats during English class. During the class, the students were also lively, involved, and enthusiastic. It was also backed by the second item, in which the kids sat in the same positions throughout the class. It also corresponds to Cornell's (2002) thesis, which claims that the main characteristics of effective seating arrangement are comfort and safety.

In contrast, the findings of Nomali, Sanagoo, Sarayloo, and Jouybari's (2019) study reveal that students were occasionally uncomfortable sitting in their seats due to challenges with their ability to see the text and hear the instructor effectively. According to the findings of the study, students frequently migrated to other seats near the stage.

Concerning the students' focus, it was discovered that they could not easily concentrate during the session. During the lesson, some students were unresponsive and frequently engaged in non-teaching activity. It is also similar to item number 5, in which students regularly engaged in activities that were unrelated to the lecture. During the class, just a few kids in the front and middle rows were attentive. According to their confessions during the interview, the majority of students stated that they could only concentrate on the class topic. This current result contradicts the findings of Simmons, Carpenter, Crenshaw, and Hinton's (2015) study, Shernoff et al (2016) .'s study, Xi et al(2017). study, and Nomali, Sanagoo, Sarayloo, and Jouybari's study (2019). According to the studies, the use of traditional arrangements aided students in comprehending the information and focusing on their work.

The students in this study, on the other hand, did not seem to be able to focus properly when sitting in their seats. During the class, the majority of them were completely unresponsive.

Regarding the conversation, the seats have been assigned by the teacher to allow students to easily engage in debates with their peers. The results of the second instrument demonstrated that students could converse with their partners, as well as friends adjacent to, in front of, and behind them. Students conduct discussions here by rotating their heads rather than shifting their seating position. Furthermore, despite the fact that the lesson plans are created for pupils to work in groups, the teacher does not alter the seating arrangement. As a result, teachers demonstrate a lack of capacity to manage parts of classroom management. This differs from the Ministry of Education's (2016) perspective, which states that teachers do not choose seating arrangements based on learning objectives. Xi et al., on the other hand, discovered the opposite outcome (2017). The results demonstrate that the typical setup was unsuitable for group work. Similarly, the findings of Correa, Lara, Pino, and Vera (2017) and Simmons et al. (2015) reveal that traditional sitting configurations do not encourage students to cooperate and are only ideal for solitary work. As a result, the findings contradict the existing findings. Many students do not receive feedback or have a genuine relationship with their teacher while learning with them. Furthermore, only those in the back and second rows interacted with teachers, according to the poll. Students in the middle and third rear rows received less attention and interacted with the teacher less frequently. Furthermore, Supratman (2015) discovered that communication between students and teachers did not occur interactively during normal classroom modifications. Finally, Zomorodian et al. (2012) discovered that interactions between students and lecturers occurred more frequently in the classroom's back row.

In terms of classroom activities, their seats allowed them to participate comfortably. In this case, their positions made it easier for them to complete classroom exercises. They did not experience any serious disturbances that made it difficult for them to perform activities. While sitting in their chairs, students might engage in classroom activities such as reading, writing, taking notes, and completing work effectively. The interview results also suggested that the students tended to have similar choices and responded that they could easily complete classroom activities from their locations. Similarly, Simmons et al. (2015) discovered that traditional seating arrangements can be effectively applied for students to do their work. It was discovered that this seating type caused less distraction from others and allowed students to focus more on their assignments.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the findings, the seating arrangement that supports students in terms of comfort, flexibility in carrying out activities, spaciousness, participation in doing assignments, and cooperation with other students. The traditional seating

arrangement, on the other hand, did not help them concentrate, collaborate with the teacher, or participate in discussion sessions.

Teachers use seating arrangements for students for a variety of reasons. They take a seat and explain that they are plotting their student position for some reason. This seating arrangement has an impact on the teacher's performance when delivering lessons to students, according to the teacher. Seating arrangements affect student performance in a variety of ways, including collaboration with friends, conducting discussions, seeing the teacher clearly, listening to the teacher clearly, social interaction, making points, seeing writing clearly, friends, sleeping, and cheating. eat, leaning against the wall, attracting the teacher's attention, and failing to attract the teacher's attention.

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