

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher provides the background of study, statement of problem, research questions, purpose of study, and significance of research and outline of the research. This research discusses about the online discussion that becomes a part of online learning. The researcher had three main research questions and three purposes of study. The further discussion will be explained in each chapter.

### **Background**

There are two ways to conduct teaching and learning. The first is offline strategy in which the teacher can conduct the teaching and learning activities by giving and providing the materials in the class directly. The teacher can use the media and facilities to teach the students. The media used by teacher can be various and helpful. Online strategy is the second way to conduct the teaching and learning activities. According to Kubo (2009), "Most higher education institutions are already integrated online learning in their curricula. It showed in the fall 2003 more than 75% of colleges and universities offered online learning" (p. 92). Online strategy can be conducted also by the teacher by giving the material through the devices connected to internet. The teacher and students can communicate in the discussion board.

In the ideal world, online discussion consists of the role of teacher or instructor, role of students or participants, devices connected to an internet, and also the communication in virtual room. According to Andresen (2009), "Online

learning has been expanding in the over past decades and one of the most popular modes to be used is asynchronous discussion” (p. 249). In other words, the online discussion can replace face-to-face interaction of the traditional classroom. Online discussion is the most commonly used by the teacher or instructor in online teaching and learning. It provides the ability of synchronous session and asynchronous interaction. Ryan (2011) argued that online learning can be conducted in a variety of ways, such as through the use of self-paced independent study units, asynchronous interactive sessions (where the students interact at different time) or synchronous interactive settings (where the students meet at a same time) (as cited in Smart & Cappel, 2006, p. 202).

In reality, based on the researcher’s experiences in English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta the students or participants may get problems in joining online discussion. The slow internet connection sometimes becomes the first problem faced by the students. It can be the hindrance for the students in joining the online discussion. Secondly, the students probably think that the online discussion is not really important to do. The problem is in the students’ minds set itself. It refers to the role of instructor in monitoring and guiding the online discussion and the students’ readiness to join the online discussion.

The students of English Language Education Department (ELED) learn English for education domains. The students learn English to be able to teach or occupy the role of teacher in English teaching and learning. In English teaching and learning processes, the lecturers teach the students with the various methods and teaching styles to deliver the contents in the class. Every lecturer sets the

goals and creates the activities as the guidelines to reach the goals. Based on the department's schedule, teaching and learning processes usually take time around 90-180 minutes that consist of 45 minutes per credit. In a day the students normally take the class for credit at minimum and twelve credits at maximum.

In the first meeting the lecturers provide the syllabus as a guideline for both students and lecturer through the semester. The students will know what is going to be prepared and discussed in the class. The discussion in the class will be open-ended discussion with several topics given by the lecturer. In some cases, the lecturer cannot teach for some reasons. Some lecturer has to reschedule to change the dismissed class. Some lecturers would like to make some online discussions to conduct an English teaching and learning as a substitute. The online discussions become the choice to be applied in conducting English teaching and learning. It can be conducted either in synchronous or asynchronous interaction for both students and lecturer. According to Hammond (2005), "Asynchronous discussion is offering the additional values by providing students with experiences of their computers as a communication tool and opportunities to take a part in a group work" (p. 1).

Online discussion is commonly used by the teacher in English Language Education Department at a private university in Yogyakarta based on the researcher's experience and observation. It can be done by both of instructor and participants easily. The lecturer would provide some links and discussion boards for the students. The students can post and share their ideas in the discussion boards. They can also learn and teach from one to other students. Online learning becomes more effective and enjoyable when it is delivered by lecturers

experienced in their subject matter. The students are interested to join the discussion and follow the topic given by the lecturer.

Online discussion has numerous advantages that can be achieved by both instructor and participants. Hammond (2005) found “asynchronous discussion is offering the additional values by providing students with experiences of their computers as a communication tool and opportunities to take a part in a group work” (p. 1). The students can have a time with their computers device to communicate in the group. Palloff and Pratt (1999), Kolloff (2011), Beaudoin (2001), Robler and Ekhaml (2001) and Muirhead (2004) argued that online board discussion has many benefits, including (a) Building class community by promoting discussion and serving as a vehicle through which learning can occur online; (b) Contributing to the development of problem solving, critical thinking, and writing skills; (c) Improving student achievement and satisfaction, as reflected by test performance, grades, and student satisfaction (as cited in “Online and Discussion,” n.d.); (d) Promoting the critical thinking of the students and (e) Providing students a higher level of performance than in the same online course without discussions.

The instructor’s role in the online discussion is very important. According to Andresen (2009), “Making the successful online discussion is probably the most important aspect for the instructor to consider” (p. 250). The lecturer should guide the discussion, stimulate the students and often offer intellectual leadership to create a supportive online learning environment. The students’ success in the online discussion refers to the teacher’s role in the discussion itself. Role to motivate, monitor, guide and monitor the participants. Mazzolini and Maddison

argued that the successful discussion depends on what the instructor wishes to accomplish (as cited in Andresen, 2009, p. 251). Moreover, Dysthe argued that the teacher should intervene the students to keep the discussion on track or to motivate the discussion runs well (as cited in Andresen, 2009, p. 251).

Online discussion is one of the tools to create and conduct teaching and learning. However, the online discussion also has the disadvantages to be avoided by the lecturer and students. For an example, according to Smart and Cappel (2006), “The asynchronous discussion is not effective as a standard method to deliver the information” (p. 203). Also Laine argued that some students commented that the online discussion eliminates classroom interaction time where the real-learning takes place and apply knowledge problem and solving and the interaction between teacher and other students (as cited in Smart and Cappel, 2006, p. 203). Moreover, according to Dixson (2010), “Collaborative or interactive activities seem to be a necessary component to effective online instruction” (p. 2). This will be the consideration for the lecturers to do the online group discussion to deliver the contents or to do question and answers sessions.

The ability to learn asynchronously is one of the primary benefits of online learning. Students are able to reflect upon their ideas before sharing them with the class, leading to more reflective responses and in-depth learning. Online discussion provides and gives the students the opportunity to decide place and time by themselves. The online discussion has a lot of functions and purposes to be done in English teaching and learning. The students can learn and improve their skills and abilities instead of reading, listening and writing on the discussion boards. The lecturer begins to look and view to use an online media to conduct their teaching and learning. There is some research conducted by the experts in

the past. The research is about the students' interaction in online course, asynchronous discussion, online interactions impacts and many others. For example, a study done by Andresen (2009) discussed the role of instructors in online discussion, the strategies, to assess it as well as its limitations. The finding is that it is clear enough that asynchronous discussion provides the opportunities to achieve the higher levels of learning, but people must be aware in making decision for this to occur.

In this research, the researcher aims to explore the students' perception in doing online discussion in English teaching and learning. My research will complete the research done by the researchers before because there is no research done with the same topic about exploring the students' perception on online discussion. The students' perceptions and the opinions are quite different among students in English Language Education Department. The target is the students' perception in using online tool as a media in conducting English teaching and learning. There will be numerous advantages and disadvantages based on the students' perception and also some difficulties faced by them.

## **Statement of Problem**

Online discussion is a tool or media to conduct an effective teaching and learning that provides the ability of synchronous and asynchronous interaction. There are numerous problems in the online discussion. The first is what actually the students feel in joining the online discussion whether like or dislike, important or unimportant. That problem will be explored by this research about the students' perception. The students' perception on online discussion will point out the advantages and disadvantages of online discussion. The second is about the internet connection while joining online discussion. It will become the hindrance when it changes to be slow and late. The researcher aims to find out the students' perception on online discussion in English teaching and learning. The students' perception cannot be one opinion, but it will be quite different among students.

## **Research Question**

The researcher has proposed the research questions for this research. There are three main research questions as a research guideline. The questions are:

1. What are the advantages of doing online group discussion based on the students' perception?
2. What are the disadvantages of doing online group discussion based on the students' perception?
3. What are the difficulties faced by the students in doing online group discussion based on the students' perception?

## **Purpose of Research**

Based on the research question above, the purposes of the research can be:

1. To ascertain the advantages of doing online group discussion based on the students' perception
2. To ascertain the disadvantages of doing online group discussion based on the students' perception
3. To ascertain the difficulties faced by the students in doing online group discussion based on the students' perception

## **Significance of Research**

The research is expected to serve the benefits and good impacts. This research of the students' perception on online group discussion is expected to be further references for those who want to conduct research from any other perspectives and purposes. The significance of the research are theoretical significance and practical significance.

### **Theoretical Significance**

This research can provide the information about the learning theory of the use of online discussion to conduct an English teaching and learning that is related to teaching and learning method and media. Hopefully this research can be one of references for further research.



## **Practical Significance**

There are some parts of practical significance as explained in the following paragraphs.

**Other researchers.** This research is expected to be the one of references for further research. The further research can be related to the online teaching and learning methods and online media for teaching and learning. After reading this research, the other researchers can know the advantages and the disadvantages on doing online discussion based on the students' perception. The other researchers can apply this method and media in a good way and determine the considerations before conducting an English teaching and learning using online discussion.

**The students.** This research serves the information about the students' perception on online discussion. They can know the advantages, disadvantages and difficulties based on the students' perception in doing online discussion. This research can help the students to maximize the advantages and minimize its disadvantages. By knowing this information, hopefully the students can be more motivated and participative in doing online discussion.

**The teacher.** The teacher can conduct an effective English teaching and learning using online media. By knowing the information the teacher can find out the way how to minimize the disadvantages and maximize its advantages in doing online discussion. The information can be evaluated and improved by the teacher who applies this method in their teaching and learning processes.

## **Outline of Research**

This research contains five chapters. Chapter one introduces the background of the research, statement of the research, research questions, research objectives and the significance of the research. The contents of chapter one are about the overview of why the research be done.

Chapter two is the literature review. It provides the definition of online discussion, types, its advantages and disadvantages based on the expert's statement. It also provides the conceptual framework as a simple map of advantages and disadvantages of online discussion. This chapter explains the theory related to the overview of online discussion in teaching and learning.

Chapter three is the methodology. This chapter explains about how the research will be conducted by the researcher. This chapter discusses the methods, the instruments, the participants, settings and data gathering techniques. In this chapter, the researcher also explains how to analyse the data.

Chapter four contains the finding and discussion. This chapter presents the result of data analysis. There are two main points that are elaborated in this chapter, which is the problem in the online discussion and English teaching and learning process at ELED at a private university in Yogyakarta.

Chapter five consists of the conclusion and recommendation. This chapter explains general answers of the research questions and the recommendations from the researcher. The recommendations are given to teachers, students and other researchers.