

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter contains the theories related to the overview of the online discussion. This chapter also discusses the general use of online discussion viewed from its definition, types, online in English teaching and learning and its advantages and disadvantages. Online learning can be a breakthrough to conduct the teaching and learning.

Definition of Online Discussion

Online teaching is a one of the methods used in the teaching and learning processes. The teacher can be the instructor in the teaching and learning process. O'Neill, Singh and O'Donoghue (2004) argued that online learning can be defined as instruction delivered electronically via the internet, intranets, or multimedia platforms such as CD-ROM or DVD (as cited in Smart & Cappel, 2005, p. 201). Online discussion becomes the part of online learning. It is a media or tool to provide teaching and learning in online teaching and learning. Online discussion can be defined as the activity provided by the teacher or instructor to respond and reflect each other through their electronically devices connected to an internet.

Types of Online Discussion

The online discussion or online teaching and learning can be divided into two types. According to Duncan, Kenworthy and Mc Namara (2012), “Synchronous online discussion is a communication strategy which provides a real time or where the participants are doing the discussion at the same time in the chat room and asynchronous online discussion is where the participants interact in the

different times in the discussion boards accessible daily or weekly” (p. 3-4). Ryan (2011) argued that online discussion in this discussion can be implemented in a variety of ways, such as through the use of self-paced independent study units, asynchronous interactive sessions (where participants interact at different times) or synchronous interactive settings (where learners meet in real time) (as cited in Smart & Cappel, 2006, p. 202).

The lecturers in ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta usually use both the synchronous session and asynchronous learning interaction, which means that the teacher can conduct teaching and learning at the same time regularly or sharing ideas at the different time. The responsibility and the discipline are needed in the asynchronous online discussion. The teacher can provide the attendance list in the discussion boards to control the activity to avoid students’ insincerity in the discussion process. Dysthe (2002) argued that the teacher should give an intervention to students to keep the discussion on track or to motivate the discussion runs well (as cited in Adresen, 2009, p. 251). Hammod’s (2005) study found that very few authors were prepared to make some comparisons between on-line and face to face discussions or to argue that on-line discussion is better than face to face one. However the majority of authors concluded that asynchronous on-line discussion is potentially valuable or very valuable to support the teaching and learning processes. The general arguments used as evidences are it can provide the opportunities to interact between learners, asynchronous had high rate of participation and it more motivate the students to join the discussion. (p. 7).

In other words, it can be stated that asynchronous discussion can help both lecturer and students to know each other and to provide a clear interaction in the teaching and learning processes. Asynchronous discussion is preferable to be

conducted in the teaching and learning with the teacher's controls and monitoring. However, the students of ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta are accustomed to joining both synchronous and asynchronous provided by the lecturers. Synchronous discussion is provided by the instructor and become the central learning process. The students' responsibility and discipline in learning are encouraged. The students will also experience in the asynchronous discussion the ability to post their feeling in the board provided. The students will feel free to post, reflect and share their ideas among other students in the discussion board. Andresen's (2009) study found that asynchronous forum discussion should be specifically analysed in order to create the asynchronous discussion to be as (or more) effective as face to face discussion. Some of the benefits of asynchronous discussion are: (1) it allows the people who need more time to participate in the discussion. (2) The discussion of participants cannot be "cut off", and (3) there is a transcript of the discussion for study purposes after the discussion takes place. (p. 249-250)

Online Discussion in English Teaching and Learning

In English Language Education Department online discussion is a common method used in English teaching and learning. The lecturer provides the ability of synchronous sessions and asynchronous interactions for the students. Similarly, according to Duncan, Kenworthy and McNamara (2012), "We can say that encouraging high quality and frequent participation in both synchronous and asynchronous forums will help maximise student performance" (p. 2). Students will have ability of asynchronous interactions in posting, sharing and reflecting their ideas among other students in the provided boards. Sometimes the lecturer

will inform and instruct the students to have a synchronous discussion with the specific topics presented by the teacher or the questions formed by the teacher. The students have to reflect the teacher's instruction or to answer the teacher's questions in the time. Most of the lecturers instruct the students to have specific application software which supports the English teaching and learning.

Hossain and Wiest (2013), and Mohammad, Saleh and Salam (2015) argued that there are various online teaching tools that are suitable and that are open and free for both teacher and students to use. The most popular tools are Wordpress, LinkedIn, MySpace, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Edmodo, Nexopia and many others (as cited in Ekici, 2017, p. 93). Ekici (2017) found that Edmodo is a free social learning platform that allows students to access the course's contents uploaded by their teacher (p. 93).

The researcher have found another application used in teaching and learning. According to Deni and Zainal (2015), " Padlet is a tool and it is a simple web-application which enables the creation of virtual walls where students and teacher can write on or pin up images or files" (p. 364). Deni and Zainal's (2015) study found that Padlet 1) encourage the formation of virtual communities where students not only learn from the teacher but also from one other, 2) enhance learners' engagement with course content, and 3) create "safe" virtual space for learning (p. 364).

The two biggest applications provide synchronous session and asynchronous section used in ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta are Edmodo and Padlet. In the online discussion the students are involved in the learning process. Their critical thinking is also needed to reflect someone's posting. The online discussion will be helpful to improve the students' reading

and writing ability in its activity. Kolloff (2011) argued that online discussion contributes to the development of problem solving, critical thinking, and writing skills (as cited in “Online and Discussion”, n.d). The teaching and learning processes would work effectively when the students are active and reflective in the activity. Bransford, Brown and Cocking (2000) and Driscoll (2002) argued that learning theory suggests that learning is promoted or enhanced When (a) students are actively involved in the learning processes; (b) assignments reflect the real-life contexts and experiences and (c) critical thinking or deep learning is promoted through applied and reflective activities (as cited in Smart and Cappel, 2005, p. 202)

The Advantages of Online Discussion

Balasubramanian, Jaykumar and Fukey (2014); Ekmekçi (2016); Mokhtar (2016) argued that the social learning platform allows teachers and students to communicate with each other via messages, thus providing learners with the chance to communicate and collaborate in a virtual classroom environment (as cited in Ekici, 2017, p. 93). According to Murray *et al* (2012), “Online courses provide more opportunities to create active learning environments, address the learning styles of today’s technology connected students, foster a greater variety of experiences outside the classroom, teach students how to do independent research, make college more accessible to students, make attending college more

affordable, teach students about making ethical choices, and create online courses that meet high quality standards for teaching and learning” (p. 126). That statement can be related to Driscoll’s and Carliner’s statements about relating the topic in the online discussion to the real-world context.

Driscoll and Carliner (2005) argued that online instruction has the potential to provide opportunities to promote reflective thought and deep learning through realistically integrating and applying principles learned. Online instruction such as a simulation thrusts learners into a learning experience, increasing engagement and providing activities that actively engage learners to analyse, synthesize, and evaluate information while constructing knowledge (as cited in Smart & Cappel, 2005, p. 203). The students can conduct an autonomous learning by group online discussions they made with the classmates or the students’ major group in the collage.

There are some considerations in order to create the online discussions as well as traditional face to face discussion to be more effective. According to Dixson (2010), “There are two primary reasons for studying the student engagement in the online courses. Firstly, online courses are emerging and growing so that the instructor and students need to do it well. Secondly, the primary component of effective online teaching and learning is student engagement. It is imperative to engage students in the learning process in order to offer effective discussion in teaching and learning processes” (p. 1). Many researchers carry out researches actively on the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. The researcher who conducts this research pointed out some information about the advantages and disadvantages of online discussion. There are some benefits of online discussion which attract the teachers to do it in their

teaching and learning processes as well as the lecturers in the ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. Online board discussion has many benefits, including;

Constructing the students' interaction and cooperation or collaboration.

One of some benefits is that online board. It can develop the students' interaction among the students in the discussion boards. According to Dixson (2010), "One of the recurrent themes in the literature is the effectiveness of using collaborative activities, group discussions, and other forms of student-student interaction. They believe an interactive and cohesive environment that includes group work, regular assignments, and solid feedback are needed for success" (p. 2). The online discussion involves the class community in the activities. The activities in the online discussion are provided by the lecturer to be done by the students in the class. From that moment the students can improve their skills and also their interaction among other students. The students' team work can be achieved in the activities in the teaching and learning processes.

Improving the critical thinking and writing ability. Kolloff (2011) argued that the online discussion contributes to the development of problem solving, critical thinking, and writing skills (as cited in "Online and Discussion" n.d). The lecturers are an instructor in the online discussion activities. They can give some materials or topics which are going to be discussed in the time. The materials were delivered by instructors or the topic was given by the instructors to the students so that they can involve their critical thinking to solve every problem in the discussion. They can surf the webs to find out the solution for the problems. They will try to read and understand the text they read. After reading the articles

to solve the problem they will post what they obtain. The students can post about their knowledge and ideas in the discussion board.

Providing deep-learning. According to Smart and Cappell (2005), “Online instruction provides opportunities to promote reflective thought and deep learning through realistically integrating and applying principles learned. Online instruction, such as a simulation, thrusts learners into a learning experience, increase engagement and provide activities that actively engage learners to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information while constructing knowledge” (p. 203). The students can learn the lesson and can be reflective in the discussion. The students get some topics and instruction from the lecturers so that they can share their ideas about it. They can respond and reflect someone else’s opinion in the board discussion too. The teacher should provide clear instruction and real-context learning in order to create the effective online discussion as well as a traditional face to face discussion.

Giving the high performance. Online discussion gives positive impacts for the students. There will be some differences result between learning with the discussion and learning without the discussion. Beaudoin (2001) explained that the online discussion provides students a higher level of performance than in the same online course without discussion. The students’ joining in the online discussion will obtain more knowledge and understanding than those who did not join the discussion. In other words, the discussion is preferable to be conducted in every teaching and learning process to give the students opportunity to relate it to the real life context.

Increasing the students' achievements. The provision of online discussion becomes a facility to achieve the learning's goal in every course. The lecturer in the course has to attempt to full fill the sheet and give the checklist for every purpose. In the online board discussion the students can achieve the purpose of learning. They can improve their skills and they can construct the class interaction among the students. Roblyer and Ekhaml (2000) explained that online discussion improves the students' achievement and satisfaction, as reflected by test performance, grades, and students' satisfaction. The students can get the all advantages of the online discussion if they do the discussion well. The students were involved to be more active and reflective in the activities so that they can achieve the goals of the activities.

According to Zucker and Feldman (2009), "The online interaction can provide the opportunities for the students to be reflective and responsive among others. The online discussion can also provide the ability of synchronous session and asynchronous interaction" (p. 5). The students can ponder the deep-learning without time limitation in constructing the knowledge. Bonk and Cunningham (1998) argued that research has shown that the electronic environment can be structured for effective social constructivist that requires interactive online discussion learning (as cited in Wilson & Stacey, 2004, p. 259). In other words, the online discussion can also build the students' class community. It can offer the freedoms to the students to create an interaction between student to students, students to the teacher and also teacher to the students.

The Disadvantages of Online Discussion

From the discussion above the lecturers and students can find many benefits and advantages of the online discussion. However, the online discussion also has some disadvantages. The asynchronous discussion is not appropriate enough to be applied in the real-world context. Real-world means right here and right now. We can imagine we are in a rush time needing the information as soon as possible but the other participants are not active in a discussion board. In some cases the students feel the lack of control and being isolated in doing synchronous or asynchronous learning because the other students and even teacher does not respond the students' post one by one as in a traditional classroom. They would be frustrated in the activities. There are some considerations to conduct an online learning or online discussion. One of disadvantages stated by Laine (2003) is that asynchronous learning was not effective as a standalone method to deliver technical training for information technology professionals (as cited in Smart & Cappel, 2005, p. 203).

Laine (2003) argued that the learners in the study commented that online discussion eliminates classroom interaction time, where a significant amount of "real learning" takes place as users assimilate information, utilize software, apply knowledge to problem solving, and interact with the instructor and other learners (as cited in Smart & Cappe, 2005, p. 345). In other words the disadvantage of

online discussion is that it replaces the interaction in real life. Some students would feel that the online learning takes their time in the “real learning” which is taking place in the real time, place and interaction in the classroom. The teacher has to work hard to solve the students’ isolated feeling in joining online discussion. Some students prefer to choose either asynchronous or synchronous learning but some others will feel loss of their interaction in real life.

The researcher finds many advantages and disadvantages of online discussion. In fact, its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. Both synchronous and asynchronous discussion can be chosen depending on the agreed time from the teacher and the students. Online discussion has many benefits which attracts the teacher’s interests. However, the teacher also has to pay attention to the potential problems in online discussion. The lecturers in ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta have applied the online discussion in English teaching and learning to achieve the course goal. Both lecturer and students collaborate in doing this online discussion so that they can achieve the specific purposes in English teaching and learning processes.

Previous Studies

There are numerous studies done by the experts in online learning domains. They have become the references of studies for the researcher of this research. The first study was concerned with asynchronous discussion forums: success factors, outcomes, assessments and limitations. This research was conducted by Andresen (2009) in Canada. 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.

Asynchronous discussion is not a method displacing instructor. It needs the intensive instruction as a traditional classroom.

The second study was related to the impacts of online interactions in learning. Online interactions impact in learning. This research was done by Wilson and Stacey (2004). The research was conducted in Australia. This research discussed about teaching teachers to teach online. The finding was that there were many approaches to shape the staff development activities to help them to integrate the technologies into their teaching through designing and establishing teacher presence online. Teachers have an important role in online learning.

The third study was about the students' perception on online learning. This research was conducted by Smart and Cappel (2005) in USA. The researchers wanted to find out the students' perception between modern discussion (online discussion) and tradition discussion (face to face discussion). The researchers perceived this research as a comparative study based on the students' perception. Its finding was that this research was not about assessing the difference between online vs. face-to-face instruction; rather, this research was more about how to use the technology effectively in the classroom and how the students reacted to it. The technology used in online situation can enrich the learning experience, do more than what we can do in face-to-face situation or other approaches.

The last study was the use of Edmodo in creating an online learning community of practice for learning. This research was conducted by Ekici (2017) in Malaysia. The research discussed about the use of Edmodo and its function in creating an online learning. The researcher used the questionnaire design under

quantitative research method. The researcher found that Edmodo application, which provided an opportunity to create a virtual classroom, could be used in teacher education for creating connections between theoretical and practical course. Some pre-service teachers presented positive views about the effects of using Edmodo in their pedagogical knowledge, their ability to use technology and their skill to establish communication and collaboration. Edmodo is a good application to use in online learning and teaching.

The current study about the students' perception on online discussion is different. The researcher aims to find out the specific information about the students' perception in doing an online discussion. This research will complete other studies and enrich the online learning research. The previous study became the comparison and reference of this study.

Conceptual Framework

Online discussion is a tool to create the learning activities through the electronic devices connected to an internet. There are two types of online discussion, synchronous and asynchronous methods. Synchronous online discussion is conducted in the same time and asynchronous online discussion is done in a different time. For some reasons the lecturer will prefer providing the online discussion board to conducting the English teaching and learning activity.

There are significant development of technology in this era that can facilitate teachers in teaching and learning. Johnston and Pallof (2005) argued that many new technologies and web based activities are interactive and online

coursework has the potential to create environments where students actively engage with material and practice learning by doing, refining their understanding as they build new knowledge (as cited in Smart and Cappel, 2005, p. 202). In other words, technologies can be the provided facilities in teaching and learning. Online discussion is one of several methods to create the teaching and learning activity.

Online discussion can offer positive impacts for students. The students can be more responsive and reflective in the activity. The other benefits are the students can relate what they obtained in the discussion board to their real-world outside the activity. According to Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, (2000); and Driscoll (2002), “Learning theory suggests that learning is promoted or enhanced when (a) students are actively involved in the learning, (b) assignments reflect real-life contexts and experiences, and (c) critical thinking or deep learning is promoted through applied and reflective activities.

There are several shortcomings related to online discussion. For example, the students will feel isolated and frustrated. Additionally they will feel that the teacher took their real class interaction in the real-life. Laine (2003) argued that there are also potential disadvantages or limitations of online learning. For example, one study concluded that asynchronous e-learning was not effective as a standalone method to deliver technical training for information technology professionals (as cited in Smart and Cappel, 2005, p. 203). Laine (2003) stated that learners in the study commented that e-learning eliminates classroom interaction time, where a significant amount of “real learning” takes place as users assimilate information, utilize software, apply knowledge to problem solving, and

interact with the instructor and other learners. The conceptual framework is illustrated in the figure below;

