

Chapter Four

Finding and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher will report the findings about the students' perception on doing online group discussion in English teaching and learning at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. The participants are the students of ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta who have experienced in joining the online discussion. The students are from the batch 2015. The findings focus on the advantages, disadvantages and the difficulties of doing online group discussion based on the students' perception to answer the three main research questions. The students' perception will be related to the experts' theories.

The Advantages of Doing Online Group Discussion (OGD)

Finding 1: OGD was very interesting. The first finding was about the student's experience in joining the online group discussion. The participant 1 said "It was really interesting because he did not need to attend the class and it became so flexible with my phone or laptop". The online discussion can give the students the opportunity and experiences to operate their devices such as phone or computer. It became something interesting for the students. The participant's opinion can be related to the statement stated by Hammond (2005). He stated that online 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.

Finding 2: OGD was more flexible. The second finding about the advantages of doing online group discussion that it was more flexible. The participant 1 stated

that an online discussion could be done anywhere only with an internet connection. Participant 1 said that the advantage was more flexible to decide time and place what was needed was only an internet connection. It refers to the types of online discussion. Online discussion can be synchronous session or asynchronous interaction. Ryan (2001) 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). In the participant's opinion, the asynchronous mechanism became preferable to be conducted because it was more flexible in time and place.

Finding 3: OGD helped students to improve preparation and performance. The third finding about the online discussion was the students could improve preparations and obtain high performance in the discussion forum. Participant 2 said that OGD could be done at home with a clear preparation as well. The preparations included the references, tools, and also the points to be discussed. The students also could take a source from the internet during the discussion. The participants in the online discussion could have a high performance then those who did not join 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.

Finding 4: OGD improved writing skill and encouraged creativity in writing. The last finding was that the online discussion could improve the writing skill. The third participant said she felt the improvement of her writing ability in an online discussion. Participant 3 said, "I can improve my writing and I try to be more creative". The participant's statement can be related to theory. 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). In joining the online discussion the participants can improve their writing ability and critical thinking.

The Disadvantages of Doing Online Group Discussion

Finding 1: Students lost the traditional discussion atmosphere. The first finding of disadvantages of doing the online group discussion was losing the real discussion feeling. It refers to the real-place where the discussion takes place. Participant 1 said, "I lose the feel of discussion because it's only in a written form so that we can't see the expressions". The participant felt he could not see the expressions of the speaker and he can only write and read the paragraph in the board.

This disadvantage was related to Laine (2003) 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. The online discussion eliminates the traditional discussion where the participants can interact with others.

Finding 2: Students could not obtain the detail information. The second finding is that the participant could not obtain the detail information in the online discussion. When the participant did not understand what the discussion was about she could not obtain the clear explanation. The participant would leave the discussion board with a question in her head. Participant 2 said, “We cannot express the feeling and get the detail information of the material”. When the participants encountered something new in the discussion, they could not get the detail information that made the online discussion under standard to be applied in teaching and learning.

This participant’s feeling reflects the theory about the disadvantages of doing online discussion. Laine (2003) stated 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). There will be a distance between material and participants’ understanding.

Finding 3: Students felt annoyed to post something without any response and comment. The last finding is that the participants felt annoyed to post something without any responds and comments. In this finding the participant would feel isolated and being rejected. Participant 3 said, “I was annoyed when I post something without any responds or comments. It’s like wasting time”. The participant felt that online discussion was wasting time. It reflected her isolated and frustrated feeling in online discussion.

The participant’s feeling is related to Hara and Kling (2000); Piccoli, Ahmad and Ives (2001) who found that the other potential problems of e-learning that have been identified in previous research include learner frustration, anxiety,

and confusion (As cited in Smart & Cappel, 2005). This feeling has presented the draw backs of online discussion. The instructor should give the attention to the all participants to avoid this feeling.

The Difficulties Faced by the Students in Doing Online Group Discussion

Finding 1: Students experienced slow internet connection. The first finding about the difficulties faced by the students in doing online group discussion was low internet connection. Participant 1 said, “The difficulty was only with the internet connection”. The internet connection became a second primary need after devices to join in online discussion. This difficulty refers to the definition of online discussion proposed by 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). It can be defined as an activity provided by the teacher through the devices connected to an internet. When participant lose one of the needs to join the online, they would lack of motivation.

Finding 2: Writing ability was lower than speaking skill. The second finding was that the participants realized that the writing ability was lower than speaking. This difficulty cannot be generalized to the all participants. This feeling actually came personally from the participant 2 herself. Actually participant 2 thought that the difficulty could be overcome. She said, “I do have problems with the writing because what we write is more slowly than what we say”. She further said that the problem only came with the writing ability. This difficulty was just the same with the theory. According to Adas and Bakir (2013) “Writing is an

intricate and complex task, it is the most difficulty of all the languages abilities to acquire” (p. 254).

Finding 3: Students found it difficult to understand teacher’s instruction.

In the last finding the participants stated that the difficulty was to understand what the teacher instructed to the students. The instruction could not be understood properly. Participant 3 said that it was quite difficult to understand what the teacher instructed in the online discussion. She said, “Sometimes what we want to post is posted by others and it’s annoyed”. This feeling showed that there was difficulty to obtain the detail information. To minimize this difficulty in joining OGD, the students better work together and help each other. The teacher also had to make the instruction easy to understand. The role of instructor or teacher was very important and became the important part in the online discussion. This case raised in online discussion and also in a traditional. According to Michigan (2017) “ Communication skills are the most important teaching skills and instrumental to becoming a successful online instructor” (p. 13). This teory explained that the communication skills quality has to be achieved.