

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

The study presents some literature reviews related to the group discussion and its benefits towards the students' interpersonal skills. This chapter covers the theories and references of the definition of group discussion, the types of group discussion, group discussion in EFL classroom, the benefits of group discussion, the definition of interpersonal skill, the types of interpersonal skill, the benefits of interpersonal skill and the benefits of group discussion for students' interpersonal skills. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide the literature that became the foundation of this study. The researcher also explains some review of the the previous studies related to the research. Then, the conceptual framework to give the general overview for the reader about the theoretical support.

#### **Group Discussion**

There are some definitions of group discussion in teaching and learning process. Group discussion is a part of cooperative learning where the students can share their ideas through communication with other friends. It facilitates the students in learning not only hard skill but also in soft skill aspect (Kato, 2016). In other words, group discussion helps the students not only in cognitive aspects, but also in social aspects such as interpersonal skill as a part of soft skills. It means that group discussion provides the students the opportunity to interact to develop their interpersonal skills. Alghamdi (2014) states that EFL students use verbal communication in group discussions to communicate their opinions with

other students in small groups. Forsyth (2014) mentions that group discussion consists of mutual relationship in which the students have interdependence or the need of the presence of someone else to discuss a certain topic. This is a dynamic activity to push the students' activeness in participation in following group discussions. Group discussion enhances the students' ability to learn cooperatively by sharing their ideas to their friends.

**Types of group discussion.** There are three types of group discussion in the classroom based on the size of the students. They are pair group, small group discussion and classroom discussion. According to Apedoe, Ellefson and Schuunn (2012), pair group discussion consists of two members and small group discussion consists of three until four members. In addition, Forsyth (2014) mentioned that small group discussion consists of two to seven members. Small group discussion provides many opportunities for the students to contribute to the group discussion because it consists of small number of people (Flosason, 2011). Classroom discussion is a larger group than small group discussion. It can consist of seven up to fifty members (Forsyth, 2014).

**Group discussion in EFL classroom.** Group discussion in EFL classroom in higher education, group discussion is one of method of introducing soft skill in ELT context. The purpose of this method is to promote communication skill, critical thinking skill and problem solving skill (Tevdovska, 2015). It also made the students are dealing with diverse backgrounds of students who they can improve their communication skill, social sensitivity and emotional engagement with (Cheruvellil et al., 2014). Social sensitivity comprises of empathy and

integrity. Emotional engagement involves trust towards other students. EFL teacher uses group discussion to deal with diversity of students' backgrounds. As a part of an EFL country, Indonesia uses English in limited areas, such as only in educational fields (Harmer, 2007).

The implementation of English as Foreign Language in Indonesia, the students focus on the use of English as a communication in oral language. The Sybing's (2016) study found the following:

English as a foreign language (EFL) education is arguably the least defined of the three most common types of interaction (the others being conversation, typically an exchange between two people, and speech, where one speaker presents to an audience). (p. 221)

EFL students need to practice their communication skill using target language in front of many people through group discussion. According to Cahyono and Widiati (2006), group discussion provides the opportunity for Indonesian students to speak to other students in a small group discussion. The students would be more comfortable to express their ideas in a small number of students than in larger number of students. They can improve their speaking fluency. It is useful for the students to socialize with other students in EFL classrooms.

The researcher concludes that group discussion is an alternative teaching technique used by the teacher to make students learn cooperatively in a diversity of learning. Based on the explanation above, some researchers agreed that group

discussion might help the students to improve their tolerance and communication skill. They can learn together by sharing opinions in a group discussion.

**The benefits of group discussion.** Group discussion has many benefits for the students' interaction skills. In a group discussion, they socialize with other students. First, the students can learn how to communicate with other students by giving and responding other students' arguments in classroom discussions. They understand how to deal with various students' characteristic in a group discussion.

Second, group discussion promotes cooperative behavior where the students need teamwork skill. Group discussion promotes cooperative behaviors by working as a team. (Meleady, Hoptrow, & Crisp, 2013). Students cooperate with others in one group to discuss a certain topic. Students are be able to learn cooperatively in a group discussion. It enhances the students to practice their teamwork skills in a group discussion.

### **Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal skill is the human interaction skill to interact between one person to another. Bedwell, Fiore, and Salas (2014) mentioned that interpersonal skill is a collaboration of skills in human interaction. In other words, interpersonal refers to the skill of building relations, which connect people to know each other (Sunindijo & Zou, 2013). A research done by Utomo (2010) finds that interpersonal skills include many abilities, as elaborated below;

"Interpersonal intelligence (interpersonal intelligence) is

the ability to understand and be sensitive to the feelings, intentions, motivations, characters and temperaments of others. Sensitivity of showing expression, voices and gestures of other people, and the ability to establish relationships and communication with various other people." (p.97).

As a part of soft skill, interpersonal skill has an important role in human social interaction. Humans cannot be separated from social interaction in their lives. They need someone else to share certain ideas, feelings and experiences, especially for students to continue and prepare their future profession as future teachers. Tevdovska (2015) mentioned that interpersonal skill is included as a part of important education in the university curriculum. It can give an additional point for the students' social competence to be ready to enter their future workplace after they graduate from the university. This skill is helpful for the students who want to be a teacher in the future (Schulz, 2008). The teacher can teach the students interpersonal skills during the group discussion process. Þórarinsdóttir (2012) stated that interpersonal skill training makes the students develop interpersonal skills such as self-disclosure, active listening and respectful working in a team environment. Interpersonal skill is important for the students to interact with other students. It aids the students to develop the skills needed to socialize with other people in their future workplace.

The researcher concludes that interpersonal skill is a part of soft skills where students have interdependence with someone else. According to Segal, Cimino, Gerdes, Harmon, & Wagaman (2013), interpersonal skill and social

empathy index support the social life interaction of human beings. They can improve their empathy by doing group discussion. It is beneficial for them to socialize with other students.

**Types of interpersonal skill.** Some researchers define interpersonal skill in to several types. There are two main parts of interpersonal skills, namely communication skill and relationship-building skill (Bedwell et al., 2014). Every type has sub types. Communication skill is divided into four sub types including active listening, oral communication, non-verbal communication and assertive communication. Moreover, interpersonal relationship-building skill is divided into five sub types as follows: Cooperation and coordination, trust, intercultural sensitivity, social influence and conflict resolution and negotiation skill. The further explanation is elaborated as follows:

***Communication skill.*** Communication is the human skill to connect with other people in interaction, especially in education. Christie (2012) argues that communication do not only involve producing voice from the mouth, but can also be in visual forms. Sundari (2017) mentions that there are two types of communication skill, namely verbal and non-verbal communication.

Communication takes place at least between two persons, so it needs a speaker and a listener. They can exchange their opinions and information in a group discussion through communication. In a group discussion, the students can improve their communication by rehearsing communication skills when they discuss particular topics through the traditional face-to-face discussion.

Meanwhile, the research conducted by Bedwell, Fiore and Salas (2014) mentioned that communication skill is divided into four types, as follows:

*Active listening.* Active listening involves paying attention to what the speaker is saying. According to Eunson (2012), active listening is different from hearing. First, the term 'listening' involves the situation in which the students consciously want to get new information from the speaker. The listeners are paying close attention to the speaker to get comprehensive understanding through asking questions. The listeners and the speaker have chances to exchange information. The example of active listening is when the students give full attention and interest to listen to the information from the speaker in a group discussion, which is done by listening first and then giving responses by asking questions to the speaker.

Secondly, hearing is an unconscious activity where the students get information without any objective purpose to attain information. Sometimes, students do not give attention at all. However, active listening and hearing has the same mean, as it involves attaining information by ears. Hearing is the ability to hear without any objectives, such as when we hear the sound around us in our daily life (Eunson, 2012).

To sum up, the researcher argues that listening is different from hearing, as active listening takes place when students pay the attention. Active listening needs full attention to what the speaker says. The students need to pay close attention to the speaker in gaining the information from the speaker.

*Oral communication.* The definition of oral communication is producing sentences with the mouth or spoken forms (Bedwell, et al., 2014). It is projected in the form of verbal communication which purpose is to give them the chance to express their feelings through saying something. It has benefits to build relationships by connecting their emotion in face-to-face interactions. Good oral communication is supported by public speaking skills because the audience is more than one person in a group discussion. The example is when the students share their argument. They produce a language verbally from their mouth in oral communication as means to send information. It supports them to express their opinion to the listener. To sum up, oral communication skill is verbal communication used by the speaker to transfer certain information to the listener.

*Non-verbal communication.* Students communicate to other students do not only use verbal communication, but also non-verbal communication. Păstae (2017) explains that a group discussion provides students non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is an indirect communication commonly used by the teacher in teaching and learning by observing visually using human senses. Non-verbal communication is divided into two types, namely body language and gestures (Bedwell, et al., 2014). The purpose of non-verbal communication is to help the audience to understand the discussion by seeing visually.

*Assertive communication.* Assertive communication is the way students communicate and deliver their opinion and feeling to other friends. Being assertive means that the students propose their ideas in the classroom. The



students can express their feelings in front of their friends. Assertive communication happens when students are directly expressing feelings and opinions (Bedwell, et al., 2014). The example of assertive communication is the students is being confident in expressing their opinion directly in front of their friends.

***Relationship-building skills.*** Relationship is part of the group discussion activity where the students share their personal feelings and experiences in the discussion. They can build emotional connection in face-to-face interactions. There are five sub types of relationship-building skills of interpersonal learning taxonomy. The detailed information is explained as follows:

***Cooperation and coordination.*** Cooperation and coordination are two important aspects if the students are learning in a group. Students need to learn cooperatively. Students can build the relationship by building coordination as a team. Christie (2012) states that cooperation and coordination is a part of teamwork. It means that they cannot work alone because a group discussion consists of students who have the same tasks in a group. They need to work together interdependently with each other (Forsyth, 2014). Learning together in a group provides more advantages than working individually to finish tasks in which they can share the roles as a team. Cooperation and coordination help the students to build their relationships among students in a group discussion.

***Trust.*** Trust is an individual belief to integrate with other people. It might be done through sharing students' opinions in a group discussion. Trust is an

in individual's belief or perception on the integrity of another person to share information with other people (Bedwell, et al., 2014). Trust is one of the interpersonal skills that might be needed in learning together as a team member. According to Lau and Rowlinson (2009), interpersonal trust supports the students to create good relationships and teamwork. The researcher argues that interpersonal skill, which in this case, trust, connects students positively in learning.

*Intercultural sensitivity.* Every student has their different backgrounds. An example is students' cultural background. Culture is the way of thinking where students are united to implement their belief in certain areas. There can be different cultural backgrounds in a group of people. According to Chouinard and Cousins, by being open towards diversity, different culture, different backgrounds, and different languages, students can be more aware of multiculturalism as it grows to be a global phenomenon (as cited in Christie, 2012, p.744). Diversity of culture in a group makes the students learn about those who come from different background of culture.

Having intercultural communication can help the students to understand other cultures from different places in a group discussion. Based on the researcher's experience, the researcher has friends from different places in Indonesia. Being aware of the different and various cultural backgrounds and personalities, each member can exchange their insights into these topics during the group discussion. That is why, based on the researcher's preliminary observation, some universities have been introduced with cross-cultural

understanding in their discussion activity. Through this type of interpersonal skill, students are able to expand their knowledge about cultures from different countries by conducting discussions in a group. Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) mention that intercultural communication in group discussions makes the students think in a more open-minded and tolerant manner.

*Social Influence.* A student has a role to share their belief with other students as a member in a group, starting from giving his/her perspective or belief. The students need persuasion skills. This skill has the benefit to lead other students to follow the speaker's belief. The example is when the students share their ideas. They influence other students with their belief. The speaker persuades other students to follow the speaker's opinion. By sharing an opinion, the speaker can improve their self-confidence, because their opinion is heard by the group members. Social influence is guiding people toward certain information or belief.

*Conflict resolution and negotiation.* It can be argued that some conflicts might happen during a group discussion. For instance, a different opinion emerges in a group discussion and the students refuse to agree on each other's opinions. Based on the researcher experience, it might become a conflict when the discussion turns into a debate or intense argument. It is caused by students who dominate in the discussion. Therefore, negotiation skill is needed to solve this conflict and resolve it into a group agreement. Christie (2012) mentions that conflict also happens because there is a different point of view like agree or disagree on a certain thought or idea. The teacher can teach about conflict resolution and negotiation by involving them in finding a solution through giving

problems to discuss in a group discussion. They can find a solution in the group and learn to deal with diversity through negotiation skills.

The researcher concludes that interpersonal conflict resolution or negotiation skill can solve the conflict in learning diversity. It might mediate a conflict by communicating the problem in a group. Students who have conflict resolution and negotiation skill can be the problem solver in a group discussion.

**The benefits of interpersonal skill.** The researcher concludes that interpersonal skill can help students to develop human interaction skill with other students. Interpersonal skill helps students to improve their social interaction skill. By having interpersonal skill, they will be better at communicating and developing the relationship with other students in a group. Interpersonal skill such as communication skill, openness, active listening, and teamwork helps the students interact with other students.

### **The Benefits of Group Discussion for Students' Interpersonal Skill**

The students might gain two benefits from the group discussion for their interpersonal skill that is communication skill and relationship-building skill. The further explanation will be mentioned as follows:

**Improving the communication skill.** The students can practice their communication skill. Based on Taqi and Al-Nouh's study (2014), the students can improve their communication skill in a group discussion because they have practiced to respond to other students' arguments, like how to interrupt, agree and disagree in a group discussion. This research also mentions that group discussion improves students' self-confidence in speaking with others. This is in line with a

research by Fushino (2010) who says that group discussion helps the students to improve their communication skill towards various types of students. The students can rehearse their communication skill, and then improve their self-confidence in speaking. Group discussion encourages the students to speak up in front of the other students in a group.

***Improving active listening.*** In addition, communication skill does not only produce the language in speaking, but also improve students active listening as a part of communication skill. Group discussion improves the students' active listening as a part of interpersonal communication skill. According to Păstae (2017), a group discussion provides the opportunities for the students to rehearse their active listening skill. They are not only hearing but also focusing to listen to what the speaker says. Based on Eunson's study (2012), students get advantages on the use of active listening in learning in the classroom. The students are able to respect the other students' opinion by paying close attention to the speaker when delivering arguments and asking questions. It makes the discussion interactive to support them in their communication skill.

***Improving oral communication.*** It helps the students to improve their verbal or oral communication skill in speaking. According to Tevdovska (2015), group discussion gives positive impacts for students' interpersonal communication skill. They improve their oral communication. A research done by Alghamdi (2014) proves that learning cooperatively in a small group can improve their verbal interaction. Students practice their verbal communication by following the group discussion in real settings. Păstae (2017) mentioned that the

students communicate in verbal and non-verbal communication in a group discussion. A small group discussion makes the students more comfortable to express their ideas in oral language which allows them to practice their communication skill in a group discussion.

Being involved in a group discussion, students might take benefits for their communication as a focus on the group discussion in EFL classroom. It is the part of cooperative learning where the students have interdependence in learning together. The activity of learning together enhances the students' ability to socialize with other friends.

**Improving relationship-building skill.** The students might develop their relationship skill by participating in a group discussion. Group discussion is an effective teaching technique to develop one student's relationship with other students (Cheruvilil, et al., 2014). This is also supported by Bonnano, Brocato, and Ulbig's research (2013), which stated that group discussion provides the students the opportunity to build relationships among students in real-life interaction. It helps them to make a better personal and professional relationship in sharing their opinion (Păstae, 2017). As a result, group discussion is useful for the students to socialize with other students in learning.

***Improving tolerance in learning diversity in cultural perspective.***

Students learn with individual differences and students might learn negotiation skills through understanding different perspectives. Forsyth (2014) mentions that small group discussion provides the opportunity for students to be involved in

group discussion. They have more intense learning interaction in small size than in large size. It enhances the students to participate in small group discussion. They are more comfortable in delivering their opinion in small number of students. According to Tyler (2017), group discussion in interpersonal classroom model demands students to learn in diversity in order to create tolerance among group members as well as respect diversity, intercultural perspective and individual differences. They can learn to communicate with intercultural sensitivity to develop their tolerance by understanding other students' perspectives.

***Improving the teamwork skill.*** Students can learn together with other friends in a group. Heterogeneous individual differences in a group discussion gives the opportunities for the students to collaborate by sharing their own perspective in their teamwork performance (Cheruvilil et al., 2014). The researcher argues that group discussion gives the opportunity for the students to develop their interpersonal skill in a small group discussion. The teacher can implement the group discussion to develop their interpersonal skill. Students can improve their communication in active listening, verbal oral communication and their interpersonal relationship-building skill. They are also more tolerant and more confident in learning using a group discussion. As a result, students understand faster when they are learning together with their friends.

## **Review of Related Studies**

Regarding additional support of this research, the researcher found similar studies related to this research topic. The researcher found that there are four studies that can be used as the review. The different part is only on the focus of the research and the methods used.

The first study is Billik's undergraduate thesis (2014) entitled Students' Perception on The Role of Group Discussion in Interpersonal Speaking Class. It used qualitative research method including semi-structure as the interview question format. The participants of this study consisted of twenty students in interpersonal speaking class from first year students. This interview applied open-ended questions to explore the students' perception. The interview was conducted in Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga. The result showed that 85% of the students argued that a group discussion is an effective teaching technique to enhance their speaking in interpersonal speaking class, and 80% of the students argued that it is helpful for the students to improve their speaking skill. It can give the opportunity for the students to practice their interpersonal skill in communicating with the group members in a discussion. Thus, Billik's research suggests that speaking or oral communication is a part of interpersonal skill.

The other research was conducted by Meleady, Hopthrow and Crisp (2013). This study showed that learning in a group discussion promotes cooperative behavior by simulating social dilemma. This study used an experimental research. It consisted of five experiments. There are two types of variable such as control condition and dependent variable. It was also divided into



five studies. The first study used eighty-one participants which ranged around 17 until 44 years old in an introductory psychology class in a large seminar room. The second study involved fifty-five female undergraduate participants who were around 18 until 28 years old in a laboratory one by one. The third study used fifty-five participants whose age range was between 16 to 32 years old, gathered from university of Kent. The next study used fifty-one participants whose age range was between 18 to 29 years old. The last one is a research that studies seventy undergraduate students who were 17 until 26 years old. The result of this experimental study showed that a group discussion promotes cooperative learning because students need to work together in a group discussion. A group discussion enhances the students' ability to interact with other students in a face-to-face interaction. It provides the students the opportunity to develop teamwork skills with other friends. In summary, a group discussion is an effective learning method to promote the social interaction and cooperative behavior. Meleady's research gives contribution to this research that group discussion assists the students to improve their teamwork skill.

Arafat (2016) conducted a undergraduated research using a qualitative approach entitled "Students' Perception on the Use of Group Discussion in Improving Communication Skill at (ELED) in one private university in Yogyakarta". The participants are ELED students of batch 2015 at one private university in Yogyakarta. The results showed that group discussion makes the students improve their communication and teamwork skill by showing active participation in the group discussion. Based on the explanation above, the

researcher can conclude that Arafat's research gives information related to this research. Arafat states that students can improve their communication by using a group discussion.

In addition, Tyler (2017) used an experimental research to conduct the interpersonal classroom model. Tyler used a group discussion as an approach where the students can learn about the diversity in learning. This study involved undergraduate students at University of Texas at Austin in social work. The result showed that interpersonal skill provides the opportunities for the students to improve their communication skill, self-confidence, and tolerance in learning diversity and expand insight into how to interact with other students. Interpersonal classroom model made the students to improve their communication and tolerance skill with cultural differences existing in a group.

From the related studies above, the researcher finds that the similarities and the differences. Four researchers agree that a group discussion can develop interpersonal skill especially their communication skill. By joining a group discussion, the students improve their teamwork skill and tolerance skill. Two of the researches used a qualitative approach and the other research applied the experimental research.