

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes the study that the researcher has conducted. The descriptions are about the background of the study, identification of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research questions, and the objectives of the study. This chapter also presents the significance of the study and the organization of the chapters.

Background of the Study

There are many teaching methods that the teacher can apply in teaching and learning process. One of them is cooperative learning. Herman (2013) stated that cooperative learning is concerned with framing student interaction in ways that are likely to raise positive interdependence and promotive interaction. Another statement about cooperative learning is raised by Slavin (2011) who argued that cooperative learning is the students' learning method acknowledged as an effective study for students' achievement in their language learning, communication, and understanding of the knowledge. Then, Majid (2008) stated that cooperative learning is a method that can increase learning comprehension and making students active in the learning process. Cooperative learning has some models such as group discussion, jigsaw, mind mapping, and role play.

One of the methods of the cooperative learning implemented in the teaching and learning process is group discussion. Group discussion is the tool to simulate students' face to face interaction with each other as each group member has the same responsibility and authority in the way they contribute their thoughts or experiences to solve problems or to take some decisions. According to Siswanti, Ngadiso and Setyaningsih (2012), the students feel

comfortable in a group and this makes them active participants in learning. It will motivate students to participate more in the teaching and learning process by observing their group member or the other students' performance. Referring to the statement above, using the group discussion method is potential to help passive students to be more active in the teaching and learning process. Hopefully, by participating in the group discussion, students can participate and contribute more in a such wider range of the group.

Small group discussion is one of a form of a group discussion. Small group discussion method is implemented as an instructional activity that encourages the students to be cooperative with every part in the group discussion, and furthermore students have a similar responsibility to take care and solve the issues together. Small group discussion is also fundamentally considered as a method that could develop the way students think and act to receive more authenticity in students' learning. According to Ur (2000), in group discussion, students do a learning task with interaction. This means that to be fully involved in a group discussion, students need the social skills and functions such as attentive listening, effective implementation of peers' ideas, cooperation and sharing of information, mutual help, talking in turn, serving as group leader, and so on.

Some courses at the English Language Education Department (ELED) in one of private universities in Yogyakarta have implemented the small group discussion method. The courses are Interpretive Reading and Argumentative Writing and Listening and Speaking for academic Purposes Purposes. All of these two mentioned courses require the students to read the material or topic before the discussion. Usually, the size of member in one group discussion consists of four to five students that is determined by students and the teacher. Small group discussion uses English as the language instruction during the discussion.

The problem is when this method was implemented, there were some students who found difficulties in explaining their idea. Expressing the ideas to other member is one of the problems faced by the students who do not have enough vocabulary. The students also feel anxious while trying to deliver their ideas. Therefore, it encourages the students to use their native language as a way of sharing their ideas. This is in line with Siswanti et.al (2012) who stated that in using small group discussions, the students tend to use their native language, not in English. When the students explain the idea, they use native language not English and sometimes mix language. Also, Jones (2007) stated that student switches their native language to English and repeat it again. Jones also added that some students were not active in the discussion.

The next problem in group discussion is the monotonous topic of discussion that gives an impact on some students' performance in the group discussion. Rivani and Novianni (2018) stated that one of the challenges using small group discussion is that the students become easy to digress from the topic. Focus on the topic is important to all the members to achieve the subject of learning. In addition, a study by Oryza (2016) with the title “Difficulties faced by students of English Education Department of University Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta in doing Group Discussion” revealed five types of difficulties faced by students. The difficulties were lack of vocabulary, grammar mistakes, pronunciation mistakes, shyness, and fear of making mistake. All these difficulties drag the researcher’s attention to explore the challenges in doing small group discussion.

Beside raising challenges, small group discussion offers some advantages. There are a lot of benefits that students could achieve by practicing small group discussion. One of them is increasing students’ critical thinking. Djamarah (2005) stated, small group discussion encourages students to think critically, which means that small group discussion could trigger students to

think more critically to solve a problem. Then, Juan (2014) believed that group discussion encourages students' speaking ability. This indicates that small group discussion also could improve students' speaking ability.

As the small group discussion has been intensively implemented in one private university in Yogyakarta, the researcher would like to expose its implementation. As each method of learning not only has its own advantages but also has its unique challenges, the researcher considers that it is important to find out both advantages and also the challenges in the implementation of small group discussion method in teaching and learning process. The researcher is keen and eager to find out students' perception on the implementation of small group discussion at ELED at one private university in Yogyakarta.

Identification of the Problems

Small group discussion is of the methods frequently used in teaching and learning English. Small group discussion method is also applied at the ELED at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta. Based on the researcher's observation when joining small group discussion at this ELED, the students do the small group discussion in various courses such as Language Research, Issues in Language Teaching and Learning courses, Reading and Writing for Career Development, and Listening and Speaking for Academic Purposes. In these courses, sometimes the implementation of the small group discussion does not run as planned. In addition, not all students benefited the small group discussion as the students have encountered challenges in doing small group discussion in the classroom. For instance, some students lack confidence, still struggle with lack of motivation, and do not have a good skill of communication. In the implementation of small group discussion in this department, it has not been working perfectly to improve students learning.

In contrast, the advantages of the use of small group discussion in teaching and learning process are sometimes neglected. The students are probably unaware of the advantages they likely gain from the small group discussion. Therefore, the students need to be aware of the benefits of the small group discussion to make them maximize the opportunity during the discussion process to gain the benefits from the small group discussion.

Delimitation of the Study

The researcher focuses on the students' perception on the implementation of small group discussion method. This research focuses on the advantages and the challenges that students faced in the implementation of small group discussion. This study is limited to be conducted at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. The participants are also limited to the 2018 batch students. This research only focuses on how students perceive the small group discussion in their English learning, especially on its challenges and the advantages.

In this research, the researcher used a qualitative approach method to gather the data. The researcher did an interview with English Language Education Department students regarding their perception on the implementation and their experience of small group discussion to get full description relating to the research questions.

Research Questions

There are two research questions that the researcher formulated. The research questions of the study are:

1. What are the challenges of the implementation of small group discussion in English learning as perceived by ELED students?

2. What are the advantages of the implementation of small group discussion in English learning as perceived by ELED students?

Objective of the Study

The researcher aims to find out the objective of the study. There are two objectives to address. Therefore, this research is aimed at:

1. Exploring the student's perception on the challenges of the implementation of small group discussion method in English learning.
2. Exploring the student's perception on the advantages of the implementation of small group discussion method in English learning.

Significance of the Study

In the significance of the study, the researcher hopes that this study can give the benefits for the students, teachers, and the next researchers.

Students. Students are aware of the benefits from the small group discussion. Hence, they are motivated to do the small group discussion activity inside the classroom. Also, they will recognize the challenges on doing the small group discussion, which hopefully could help them vanish or minimize those challenges and take the full benefits from doing the small group discussion.

Teachers. The researcher hopes that the result of this study can provide a prior knowledge to the teacher and can be consideration for the English teacher whether to apply or not the small group discussion method in the teaching and learning language. The finding of this research also gives information for teacher to guide the activity in small group discussion

effectively. By knowing the challenges, hopefully teachers are able to ease the process for students in order to get the full benefits of the small group discussion.

The next researchers. The researcher hopes the result of this study can be one of considerable reference to next researchers to conduct the similar research or research with the same topic. The researcher feels that small group discussion is an instrumental tool that needed to be applied efficiently inside the classroom to achieve all the benefits of it

Organization of the Chapters

The report of this research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one presents the research foundation including background of the study, identification of the problem, and delimitation of the problem. It also presents the research questions consisting of two points. The first research question is “What are the challenges of the implementation of small group discussion?” The second research question is “What are the advantages of the implementation of small group discussion. The next part is the objective of the study followed by the significance of the study. The last part is organization of the chapters.

Chapter two provides literature review. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the description of perception, cooperative learning, and group discussion. The researcher also explains the challenges of small group discussion. Related to the advantages of small group discussion, the researcher provides some references dealing with the advantages of the implementation of small group discussion. The next part is review of some related studies. At the end of the chapter, the researchers present the conceptual framework.

Chapter three is methodology. This chapter consists of the research design of the research which used qualitative approach with descriptive qualitative design. In this chapter, the research

setting, research participants, data collection method and data collection procedure are discussed. The last part of the chapter deals with data analysis which include transcribing, member checking and coding the data.

Chapter four presents the main content of this research. This chapter reveals all the findings of the research. The content of this chapter reveals the answers of the research questions. The findings are related to the challenges and the advantages of small group discussion. The findings were based on the students' perception. The discussion of the findings is supported with relevant references.

Chapter five consists of conclusion and recommendation. In conclusion, the researcher provides the summary of the research. The recommendations are based on the findings of the research. They are intended for teachers, students, and other researchers.