

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter presents the theories and related studies about group discussion, advantages of group discussion, students' participation in group discussion, factors influencing students' participation, and common problems appear in group discussion. In this part, the researcher also presents the review of related previous studies followed by conceptual framework as the support literature of this research.

#### **Group Discussion**

Group discussion as one of collaborative teaching technique is often used in learning activity in order to improve students' learning abilities. Most of teachers used group discussion as the teaching technique to improve students' speaking ability and critical thinking. There is several definition of group discussion by the experts. Thomton (2001) defined group discussion as a systematic communication to exchange the ideas among each member on the given topic and each member should do some roles to create successful group discussion. Furthermore, as its name suggests, group discussion is defined as a direct verbal interaction among the students (Abrar & Mukminin, 2016). Harihaj (2015) defined discussion is an active learning when the participants exchange the ideas. From those definitions of group discussion above, the researcher inferred that group discussion provides an active learning activity for the students to

actively speak and express their ideas to the other among the member of the group.

The other several experts defined group discussion in general terms. For the example, Juan (2014) stated that in group discussion there are two to six students who sit in the circle to share their ideas and make decision-making, but the larger group will provide less opportunities for the students to speak. It means the smallest the group members will provide better group discussions implementation. Next, Abrar and Mukminin (2016) believed that smaller group discussion is better than the whole-class discussion in many aspects including students' participation. Group discussion with small member facilitates more conducive situation for the participant who is hesitant to be active. Then, Thomson added that the purpose of group discussion is helping each member to explore knowledge through interaction with others and develop personal understanding about particular topic. It means that group discussions provide more information than individual. Furthermore, Harihaj (2015) stated that developing group discussion means developing students' speaking skill and positive attitudes toward friendship. In group discussion, students will discuss, argue, explain, and negotiate with each other. Thus, they remember better when they actively participate rather than individual learning.

To create successful group discussion the teacher should know how to group the students. Juan (2014) stated that the members of each group should be almost at the same level to ensure a fair participation among them. Too much members in group also reduce the chance of students' to actively participate in discussion. Juan added that the teacher should keep an eye to the group to make

sure each student actively participate in discussion, but should not spend too much time on one group. Moreover, Harihaj (2015) said that teacher should initiate the discussion and give time to students to think and share their ideas. Teacher also may participate by sharing the ideas but at the end, the students should summarize the conclusion of discussion on their own. The arrangement of seats is also important. Each member should sit face to face each other and in the view of teacher so that the teacher may observe the participation of each member.

Juan (2014) said that the topic discussed in discussion is the crucial thing. In his previous research about study on the group discussion based English-reading teaching Juan said that teacher should avoid a very difficult topic. It may influence students hesitant to be active in discussion because they lack of information about the topic. On the other hand, teacher should provide a common topic in the current situations. It may help students to actively participate because most of them feel familiar and have much information with the topic or issues. Harihaj (2015) believes that teacher should make sure the problem to be discussed is defined and give enough information to the students about the topic.

### **Advantages of Group Discussion**

Group discussion is one of collaborative teaching techniques that used to discuss any particular topic, issues or problem. This teaching technique provides a lot of advantages that beneficial to enhance speaking skill, critical thinking and students' participation in the learning process. There are several advantages of group discussion presented by Beebe and Masterson (2003). Firstly, group discussion provides a lot of information than the individual. Each member of a group has different background knowledge and experiences which support

information about the topic. Secondly, group encourages creativity. The greater the group member, the greater the opportunity to be more creative, because there are much different ideas come to one. Then, students remember group discussion better. Students will understand more about the topic and retain longer when they discuss spontaneously in the group than have to listen the materials from the teacher. Last but not least, group's decisions make a greater satisfaction. The earlier study suggests that students who involved in group discussion are satisfied with their participation in problem-solving.

Several previous researchers found that group discussions have positive contribution to students' learning. Tsang (2011) suggested that group discussions improve students' enjoyment in learning. Juan (2014) believed that group discussion trains the students' speaking and listening abilities, it also help them build the confidence and active participation in classroom. Thomton (2001) stated that group work allows the students to act out in group discussion and the others will see their participation. Pair feedback from the other may help them to evaluate their personal behavior. Harihaj (2015) stated that group discussion does not only improve students' participation but also encourage students' development skill. Harihaj added that by actively participate in group discussion students develop the responsibility to take part in discussion. Thus, students enhance communication and independence and feel more comfortable to learn.

Furthermore, Beebe and Masterson (2003) stated that group discussion provide a lot of information than individual and improve students creativity and decision making. Besides, Juan (2014) stated that group discussion improve communication between students to students and students to teacher and increase

the use of English as the second or foreign language. Moreover, Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) identified that group discussion produced more ideas and interaction among the members. The students will learn how to be more responsible and realize that success of one member is a success of all members in group.

### **Students' Participation in Group Discussion**

Students' engagement in learning becomes a crucial thing as the indicator of students' successful learning. The following experts have defined students' engagement as students' involvement or participation in learning activities to increase the learning outcomes. Ahmed, Zaman, and Samaduzzaman (2012) defined students' engagement as involvement in active learning inside and outside classroom. They added that students' engagement is the students' effort to participate in learning activities to provide the learning outcomes as expected.

Generally many of previous researchers has identified students' participation in general context. Atwood (2004) defined participation as when someone takes part in something. However, when this definition is applied to group discussion, participation means student actively speaking (Atwood, 2004). Atwood added that students who are often active in group discussion tend to define participation as actively speaking such as give a comment and those students who remain silent have broader definition of participation includes active listening and being prepared for the topic. Furthermore Atwood give the example, some students may feel that their best form of participation are just active listening and pay attention, whereas other students may feel that their best form of participation is actively engaged in discussion such as give ideas about the topic.

Furthermore, Abrar and Mukminin (2016) said that to actively engage in discussion, the students have to interact with others and have a good English proficiency. They added that it seems impossible that the students can actively participate if they do not have proper English proficiency. Turner and Patrick (2004) said that participation in learning activities is a productive habit, willing to contribute in learning, as well as the evidence of students' learning motivation. Students learn best when they are actively engage in group discussion such as repeat the information in their own words or give examples (Tesfaye & Berhanu, 2015).

Thomton (2001) identified that there are three main roles of students' participation in group discussion. The first role is to facilitate the tasks of discussing specific topic. This role includes students' participation in breaking the silence by introducing the topic, asking and giving information and reactions, restating other members' comments and giving examples in their own words, comparing ideas, and summarizing. Then, roles which facilitate the overall tasks of the group include students as the gatekeeping and timekeeping. Gatekeeping is a student who spread participation to the members by encourage those who hesitant to share their ideas. Gatekeeping also helps the group move efficiently from one topic to the next. Timekeeping is student who actively keeps the discussion in the track of time and warning the others when time allocation for discussion is nearly up. The last is role which helps to maintain the students' cooperation in group discussion. Students in this role will encourage the others to participate more by compliment their ideas, and create a relaxed atmosphere so the others will feel free to active in discussion. Furthermore, the students in this

role also involved in active listening and understand to wait for his/her turn to express their own views. Students in this role are also participating as group tension-relieving. Some students must present a joke to relax the others when discussion become so serious or disagreement becomes intense. It will help group to continue the discussion comfortably.

Cavanagh (2011) stated that students who actively contribute in group discussion retain information for longer than if that just see or hear it. Cavanagh added that active student participation led to better student attitudes and improved critical thinking skills. Furthermore, Warayet (2011) considered students' participation in group discussion improve the collaborative among the members. Harihaj (2015) said that every student should try to speak freely without emotions. Harihaj added that students will gain benefits from actively participate in group discussion such as: discussion makes student confident in understanding the content, discussion increase students' motivation and enhance students' participation. Then, through discussion students develop positive attitudes toward teaching and practice the concept of their knowledge.

### **Factors Influencing Students' Participation**

Previous research has shown that there are varieties of factors influence students' participation. Atwood (2004) identified that students with low-esteem are less likely to participate than students with normal or high self-esteem and shown that man participate more often than woman. Atwood added that the lack of preparation and time allocation also influence students' participation in group discussion. In line with Atwood, Hill (2007) also identified that gender and socioeconomic background have strong influence to students' participation.

Besides, Turner and Patrick (2004) said that personal goals may influence students' participation. Students with high personal goals want to increase their performance in learning. Thus, they believe that being actively participate in group discussion is big opportunities to learn and increase their competence. Turner and Patrick also said that students who have high personal goals feels more interest and excited to participate in learning activities. Classroom environment and teacher instructor also influence students' participation in group discussion. Turner and Patrick also said that the students would be willing to participate in group discussion where teacher provided an interesting topic and communicative to each students. Because of the lack of information about the topic, students have less idea about the problem and find it difficult to discuss.

Furthermore, Atwood (2004) found that students feel hesitant to constantly participate in group discussion because teacher criticizes students' ideas and seems disinterested in what the student said. Atwood (2004) stated that the students feel feared if the other will view them as the "talker" or dominating person because they constantly participate in group discussion. The dominating person gives a big influence for the students' participation. When discussion only enrolled by one or two dominating person, the other members does not has a chance to express their ideas. If this situation constantly happens it will decrease the students' motivation to participate and they just remain silent. If there are dominate persons in a group, they have to encourage the other to speak what they thought by asking one by one to each member about their ideas. Moreover, Atwood said that the interpersonal conflict with the classmates might be influence students to keep quiet in discussion.



### **Common Problems in Group Discussion**

Thomton (2001) stated that communication is the critical issue in any learning of discussion. Commonly, there are only some students who understand the particular topic in group discussion. If this situation happens, those who think they understand the topic will try to explain more and those who thought they do not understand will keep quiet. The individual who thought that they don't understand the topic should express what they don't understand to the group so the other member can give the clearest explanation about the topic discussed. Thomton also found that some students may distract the discussion with their own knowledge. In line with this dominating behavior, sometimes there are some students who feel hesitant giving a chance to another to express what they thought.

Another common problem appear in the group discussion is interrupting. It is also disturbing others if there is a student who interrupts to express their disagreement or different thought about the topic. In contrast, there are some students who constantly silent, distracted or non-participate in the discussions. Brings too far irrelevant stories are also distracting the group from the topic. A joke can be useful to release the tension that sometimes appears in the group discussion (Thomton, 2001). Thomton added that the students should try to avoids introduce their questions with lengthy monologs. Introduce questions with lengthy monologs which probably not reliable with the content will confuse the others about what exactly the point of the question and may make them bored.

Furthermore, Burke (2011) stated that there may be pressure from the group to follow to the majority opinion. Most people do not like to conflict with the member of the group. There may be student who agree to the solution as the majority opinion just because to avoid a different thought with the group. It makes the students not gaining the satisfaction of decision-making in the group. The solution of those problems is to make the students aware of their task and responsibility to participate in group discussion.

### **Review of Related Studies**

Tesfaye and Berhanu (2015) conducted a quantitative research studied about improving students' participation in active learning through group discussion, presentation and demonstration and identified the challenges that make student reluctant to participate in the classroom activities. This study is conducted quantitative research design. Questionnaire was distributed to the second year of tourism management students at Madda Walabu University of Ethiopia. The result of this study revealed that 75% of the students assured that group discussion gives them more chance to participate than demonstrations and presentations. This study also indicated that the major challenges that make students reluctant to participate in group discussion, presentation and demonstration were shortage of time, low academic background, shyness, low communication skill and lack of preparation. The result of this study also provides solutions to solve this problem, the first step is to motivate the student by calling their name to deliver their thought and teacher should better be friendly to the student. Ask the student to present the material to their peers before the

presentation and demonstration also helpful to increase their knowledge and group's performance.

Another study by Abrar and Mukminin (2016) explored the classroom discussion engagement experiences, the challenges and the strategies to overcome the problems. This study used qualitative research design by interviewing eight international Indonesian students in one public university in United Kingdom. The instruments of this study were demographic questionnaire and semi-structure interview. The result of this study presented that the students faced some speaking challenges in engaging classroom discussion such as language barriers, academic culture differences and individual matters. This study also presented the strategies to overcome the students' challenges in engaging classroom discussion such as having verbal responses, maintaining a positive motivation and developing learning sources.

From those related studies above, the researcher inferred the similarities and differences. Those studies above are both the same as this study that evaluate students' participation or engagement through active learning method. The differences were presented at the participants and the results of the studies. Tesyafe and Berhanu investigated the challenges that influence students reluctant to participate in group discussion, presentation and demonstration to tourism management students. The result is similar as the result of this study that indicated the factors that influence students' participation. Tesyafe and Berhanu indicated that shyness, lack of communication skill and academic background are several factors that influence students' participation. The difference is Tesyafe and Berhanu also provided the solution to solve the problem.

In line with this study, the study of Abrar and Mukminin (2016) also explored the students' engagement in classroom discussion, the challenges and the strategies to overcome the problems. The differences are the participants in the study were international Indonesian students in university of United Kingdom, and the result of the study indicated the speaking challenges faced by the students in classroom discussion. Abrar and Mukminin indicated that some students have some speaking challenges in engaging classroom discussion. The language barriers, individual matters and academic culture differences are becomes the students' challenges in engaging classroom discussion. Abrar and Mukminin also provided the strategies to overcome the students' speaking challenges.

Nevertheless, those related studies can be a reference for the researcher in conducting the study related on this issue because both studies have a similar research problem and use the similar research design as this study and it helps the researcher to use those studies as the guidelines of this research.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Participation and learning seems to be associated each other in education. Warayet (2011) described students' participation as student behavior in learning activities. Collaborative learning provides more opportunities for the students to actively participate in learning activities. Warayet (2011) said that group discussion provide more opportunities in oral participation and encourage the student who remain silent to participate more easily. Warayet also added that students, who actively participate in group discussion, successfully support each other in providing information and ideas. Students' participation can be beneficial

for the students to improve their abilities and it seems that the more students actively participate, the more they learn.

In fact, Thomson (2001) have found that students' participation is one of the problem occur in the implementation of group discussion. Not all students willing to participate, there are some students who active and passive. Furthermore, the students' activeness or passiveness participation in learning activities might be influenced by several factors. Turner and Patrick (2004) identified that internal and external factors has affected students' participation. For example the less motivation to learn might be influence the students' non-participation or the interesting topic might be influence the student to participate. Thus, the researcher concern to assesses the students' participation in group discussion and identify the factors that influence students' participation and nonparticipation. The conceptual framework of this study organized as follows:

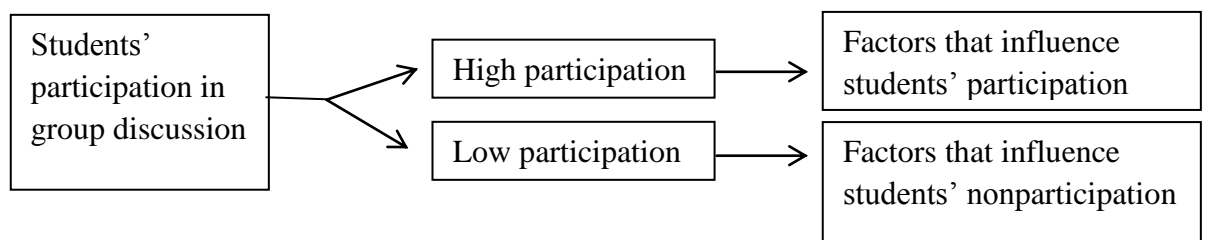


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework