

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter discusses some important aspects and theories dealing with the research. It presents the definition of students' participation, the strengths of students' participation, the factors influencing students' participation, the strategies used by the lecturers to increase students' participation, and the difficulties faced by the lecturers in applying the strategies

Students' Participation

Students' participation can be defined as various idea in education and in higher education which can encourage students not only to attend the class but it also encourages students to become active in the classroom (Mariskind, 2013). Students' participation comprises of verbal and nonverbal activities (Mariskind, 2013). Verbal activities include asking questions, giving comments, answering comments, responding to comments of others, trying to find explanations, and working in a group. Meanwhile, nonverbal activities are dealing with listening and writing. Mariskind (2013) argued that active students commonly dare to speak up in class and actively participate in class activities, while quiet students tend to only attend the class, listen to the teacher, do assignments, and be set up for class activities.

Nataatmadja, Sixsmith, and Dyson (2007) showed that in Western universities, it is believed that students' participation can help to achieve the goals of a curriculum and to develop presentation social skills. Thus, Western students

culturally will not be hesitant to comment on other students' presentation and to actively participate in class.

The Strengths of Students' Participation

Rocca (2010) argued that participation is a way to make students become more active in teaching and learning process in the classroom. When students get motivated, the learning process will also get better and they will have self-confidence. Students will become well-prepared so that they can participate more actively in the next classroom discussion. Smith (as cited in Rocca, 2010) argued when students participate in classroom discussion, their level of thinking will get higher. The more they get involved in classroom discussion, the more they can memorize, explain, analyze, and conclude the materials. Besides, the classroom discussion will also enhance their communication skills.

Other researchers, Foster, Krohn, McClearly, Aspiranti, Nalls, Quillivan, Taylor, and William (2009) mentioned that the importance of students' participation in classroom discussion is to support students' motivation and interaction, to improve students' learning of course content, to enhance students' engagement in learning, and to encourage deep learning. It can help students to develop problem-solving skills and higher order thinking skills (Foster, et al., 2009).

Participation is an easy strategy to be used, and the participation may enable students to successfully gain learning goals. Weimer (2011) stated that students'

participation is very important for the students themselves. There are a lot of benefits for students if they can participate in the classroom. The explanations are presented below:

Participation adds interest. When a lecturer delivers materials, it will be tedious if students only listen to the delivered materials (Weimer, 2011). The lecture can give students an opportunity to answer questions and give their opinions. Thus, it helps the students to hear other voices.

Participation engages students. Sometimes a good question can raise students' attention, make them curious, make them think, and influence other students to have the discussion on the issue (Weimer, 2011). The lecturer can use questions as a trigger to engage students in classroom discussion and can give follow-up questions when students have answered the previous questions.

Participation provides the teacher feedback. When the students try to answer a question and give an opinion about an issue, the lecturer can listen and see how students solve it (Weimer, 2011). The lecturer can notice their students' understanding. If the students have not got the right answer or an almost right answer, the lecturer can give them the right answer.

Participation provides the student's feedback. When the teacher explains the materials, the teacher commonly will ask questions or explore students' knowledge to give more inputs (Weimer, 2011).

Participation can be used to promote preparation. Every teacher can help students to be well-prepared for the next meeting (Weimer, 2011). For instance, in a meeting, the teacher does cold calling and asks what students have learned and prepared for the meeting. In the next meeting, the teacher also undertakes the same activities as the previous meeting. By doing the activities frequently, the students will try to be ready for the next meetings.

Participation can be used to control what's happening in class. Participation can be employed to control students who do not pay attention to the teacher or another student giving an answer or an opinion (Weimer, 2011).

Participation can be used to balance who is contributing in class and how much. In this case, the lecturer can call different students to respond to different questions (Weimer, 2011). Some students sometimes want to participate in the class, but they feel shy and anxious whether or not other students will listen to what the shy students say. The lecturer has to wait patiently and encourage the shy students to express their ideas. Thus, participation can help the lecturer to notice students and handle how often they may talk.

Participation encourages dialogue among and between students. Before class begins, students can share ideas of what they have learned and prepared for the class with their classmates. Some students sometimes cannot clearly understand

materials so that participation will make them have a discussion outside the class (Weimer, 2011).

Participation can be used to develop important speaking skills. In the real life, people need to be able to speak in front of others. People need to ask a question, or give arguments and opinions. The students need to speak up in a group since they may help one another in a group, and can develop their skills. Participation will teach students to communicate in public (Weimer, 2011).

Participation gives students an opportunity to practice using a language of the discipline. In the modern era, many fields including language will develop. Language has also grown rapidly. Due to having an occasion to practice using various vocabularies of foreign languages, many students no longer think that language is difficult for them because language is always new and different (Weimer, 2011).

The Factors Influencing Students' Participation

In education, a classroom is one of the places where learning process and students' interaction take place. Students' participation in the classroom is influenced by several factors. Musthapha, Rahman, and Yunus (2010) argued that factors influencing students' participation are divided into factors which encourage students' participation and factors which discourage students' participation from participating.

The factors encouraging students' participation. Musthapha, Rahman, and Yunus (2010) ranked factors encouraging students' participation. The factors are

respectively positive lecturer traits, classmate traits, engaging class content, and conducive physical settings. The explanations are presented below:

Positive lecturer traits. Positive lecturer traits are the most influential factor encouraging students' participation. "Supportive lecturers who make it clear to the students, welcome active participation and do not mind mistakes are seen as a positive influence for the students to participate in class" (Musthapha et al., 2010 p.1081). The lecturers understand what their students' need; they can surely make students feel comfortable in the class; they can make the learning process become fun and easy to be absorbed by the students; and they can motivate students to participate in the class. The lecturers who can make their students feel comfortable in the class are open-minded, supportive, approachable, and friendly. The other criteria of the lecturers are always allowing their students to give opinions, accepting different opinions of the students, giving smile, and always giving feedbacks (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012; Musthapha et al., 2010).

Positive classmate traits. Classmates also influence the learning process. According to Musthapha et al., (2010), "having the classmates who they know well and have the traits of being supportive influences students positively and propels them to be more active in class"(p. 1081). Classmates who have better English are not egoistic to the other classmates whose English skill is not quite good. With their ability, they can motivate their classmates to be more active in the classroom.

Engaging class content. In the learning process, students need some fun activities that make them become more active in the class. Roleplay is one of the activities that students need. They feel excited to do fun activity. Besides, students also need interesting topics. Students will participate more when they are familiar with the topic (Musthapha et al., 2010).

Physical settings. This is one of the factors that will also influence students' participation in class. Factors that can affect students' participation in class is class condition, students' seating, and class size (Abdullah et al., 2012; Musthapha et al., 2010; Foster et al., 2009; Howard, Short & Clark, 1996; Howard & Baird, 2000). Musthapha et al. (2010) revealed that students had much funnier when a class comprises about or less than 30 students. When it is a small class, students do not need to talk too loudly and other students will listen to and discuss one another. A comfortable class is facilitated with air conditioner, soft chairs, and a broad space.

The factors discouraging students' participation. A research of Musthapha et al. (2010) found that there are five factors that discourage students to participate in class. The five factors respectively are negative classmate traits, negative lecturer traits, negative student traits, non-conducive physical settings, and uninteresting and difficult class content.

Negative classmate traits. Research of Musthapha et al. (2010) showed students' behaviors affect students' participation. A noise made by students can hamper other students' concentration so that they cannot participate well in class.

Negative lecturer traits. Abudllah et al. (2012) argued that lecturers play important roles to encourage students to participate in classroom discussion. Positive lecturers traits make students participate in the class, while based on Musthapha et al. (2010) negative lecturers traits make students not participate in the class. Musthapha et al. (2010) mentioned negative traits of lecturers such as "having poor teaching skills, being impatient, and being unapproachable" (p. 1082).

Negative student traits. Negative student traits come from themselves. For instance, they feel afraid of making some mistakes when participating in class such as stating wrong pronunciation or making their friends not understand what they explain (Musthapha et al. 2010). This is also supported by Abdullah et al. (2010, p. 519), "students become passive in the classroom due to the self-limitations, such as not being able to focus during the lecture or learning time and being anxious about offenses".

Non-conducive physical settings. Musthapha et al. (2010) found that, "the physical layout of the classroom like a cramped class and a large number of students in class is influential in discouraging them from participating" (p. 1083). Students feel uncomfortable when the class is small; it is not facilitated with air conditioner;

the position between a table and a chair is near; and they cannot hear and see what is in front of the class (Musthapha et al., 2010).

Uninteresting and difficult class content. “The students faced difficulties in understanding the class content and lost focus when it was uninteresting” (Musthapha et al., 2010, p. 1083). If the topic is so difficult for the students, they will only hear and keep quiet. The students are afraid of making mistakes if they explain or give comments. The students do not know what to say because they try to understand what the lecturer or their friends explain.

The Teachers’ Strategies

The research attempts to find out the strategies employed by teachers to facilitate in classroom discussion. Research of Nataatmadja, Sixsmith, Dyson (2007) found some students prefer if the class is divided into small groups. They think that it is an effective way to stimulate discussion. “This is less intimidating for students whose English is poor”. Spreading the good English speakers around the groups also helps (Nataatmadja et al., 2007, p. 76).

According to Cirillo (2013, pp. 1-5), there are ten strategies to support teachers to facilitate productive classroom discussion which are written as follows:

Attend to the classroom culture. It is a condition that a teacher changes classroom culture into student-centered learning that students are encouraged to be more open and to actively participate in class.

Choose high-level task. It is a strategy to make the students have an interesting discussion. Before the lesson begins, a teacher should arrange some tasks for their students.

Strategies use to solve the tasks and monitor their work. Students can use their ideas to solve their tasks, while the teacher can see their students' activities and can control the students to always be on a good track.

Allow student to think to shape the discussion. A student may communicate with their peers in a small group, and students can express their opinions so that they become focus of attention in the classroom discussion.

Examine and plan questions. A teacher has to know whether students have already understood the lessons or not. The teacher can notice students' understanding from their responses to questions individually and their contribution to classroom discussion.

Be strategic about “telling” information. Students can tell or share lessons which they have read on books or other references to other students.

Explore incorrect solutions. A teacher can encourage students to contribute to identify and solve a problem instead of giving a correct solution immediately. Correct and incorrect solutions proposed by students will help them to think and understand why the solutions do not make sense.

Select and sequence the ideas to be shared in the discussion. A teacher can select students to present their works and tell the selected students how and what they have to share their work.

Use teacher discourse moves. There is a new way to make students participate in a discussion that is talk moves. It is believed that the talk moves can enhance productive talk in classroom discussion.

Draw connections and summarize the discussion. A teacher should facilitate students to link their proposed solutions so that their discussion will end with a summary.

Based on Kate (1999) and Rocca (2010), there are two other strategies which can be used by the teachers to increase students' participation. The first strategy is brainstorming. This strategy is an excellent method which makes students interested in the lesson. To get various responses from students, the teacher can give students a simple topic or a hot issue. The teacher has to make sure that all students are aware that there is not the right or wrong answer.

The second strategy is dividing the class into small group discussion. Small group discussion is a valuable method for college or senior high school students, especially students who are shy to share their opinion in a large group. In the small group, students who feel shy can have the confidence in the discussion.

McGinial (2005) stated that to engage students in classroom discussion, a teacher can provide a topic that students are familiar with the terms, fields, and issues. It will make students actively participate in the discussion, and it will enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In fact, every student can develop their critical thinking, but they have to pay attention to the quality of their statements and solutions that they propose. Every problem must have solution. The teacher may let students solve the problem, but it should be monitored so that the students are always on a right track. McGinial (2013) emphasized that a teacher possesses an important role even though student-centered learning is applied in class. In the classroom discussion, the teacher should facilitate students to improve the quality of the discussion.

Those are the strategies in increasing students' participation that are applied by English lecturers. Those strategies are very helpful either for students to speak English and the English lecturers themselves to create effective teaching and learning in increasing students' participation and achieve the teaching and learning goals.

The Teachers' Difficulties

In the classroom discussion, the lecturers have many strategies that will make the teaching and learning process run effectively because the lecturers can implement some strategies that appropriate with students' need. In fact, it is not only students who have the difficulties, but lecturers also have the difficulty. There are several difficulties faced by lecturers in applying strategies in the classroom. Based on Swales (as cited in Balla, 2014), there are three difficulties in the classroom faced by the lecturers. First, the presence of the students in the class because the students have a problem with learning English and give no any result for lecturers or students. Second, many of the standards. Students have different abilities and level, and the lecturers face those things. Third, the lecturers have no extra time to teach. At the end of the course, the students' knowledge seems like it does not increase, but the lecturers do not have time to teach them.

According to Balla (2014), another resource of the teachers' difficulty is students' different level. The different skill in this case is students' English skill. In a class, there are some students who have high level of English skill, and there are also some students whose English skill is low. Based on the researcher's experience the researcher faces some difficulties in following the classroom discussion. The researcher is fear to make mistakes when participating in the class. It was line with Al Nakhalah (2016) there appear some students' difficulties that are faced by lecturers. The students' difficulties that faced by lecturers' are fear making mistake, losing face,

the students do not have motivation to show themselves, some of students dominate in the group or class, then the other students only quiet and become silent.

Review of Related Studies

In doing this study, the researcher reviewed some prior studies. The first research was conducted by Abdullah, Abu Bakar, and Mahob (2012). This research was conducted at The National University of Malaysia. The participants were students of Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. It consisted of three classes. Those classes are class 1 (two undergraduate classes at second year), class 2 (third year), class 3 (postgraduate class). The number of students in each class were 39, 31, and 29.

This research used observation and focus group discussion to gain the data. The observation was held for 5 weeks of learning processes. The purpose of doing observation is to identify the forms and level of participation in order to categorize them for focus group discussion. The focus group discussions were conducted with six groups of students. It consisted of three active groups and three passive groups. The discussion was held for one up to two hours. The research found out the factors influencing students to participate in classroom discussion. The factors were personality factor, environmental factor, instructor or lecturer factor, and classmates or peers factor.

The second research was done by Nataatmadja, Sixsmith, and Dyson (2007). The objective of this study is to investigate the strategies for improving class participation by Asian Students. The research used qualitative approach. The researcher used focus group and semi-structured interview to gain the data. The participants of the research were the staff and the students. The researcher got the first participants by choosing twenty academics from a Faculty of Information Technology at an Australian University based on their availability and willingness to be interviewed. The second participants were 36 students with five focus group, two for local undergraduates, two for Asian undergraduates, and one for postgraduates. The research results showed the Asian students believed that class participation was useful. The lecturer who had better strategies were needed by Asian students.

In conclusion, those studies are related to this research because those studies also discuss about strategies to increase students' participation. However, there is difference between this study with those two prior studies. This study do not only focus on the strategies applied by the lecturers in increasing students' participation, but this study also focuses on the difficulties faced by the lecturer in applying the strategies to increase students' participation.

Conceptual Framework

This study aims to investigate the strategies used by the lecturers in increasing students' participations and to find out the difficulties faced by the lecturers in applying the strategies to increase students' participation. Students' participation is a

plan in education and in superior education which does not only engage students to attend the class but it also encourages students to become active in the classroom (Mariskind, 2013). Students' participation is influenced by several factors. According to Musthapha, Rahman, and Yunnus (2010), factors that affect students' participation in the class include the factors which encourage students' participation and the factors which discourage students' participation. Both factors have similar causes that are classmates, students, lecturers, class contents, and physical setting (Musthapha et al., 2010; Abdullah et al., 2012; Foster et al., 2009). The factors which encourage students' participation becomes the lecturers' strategies to increase students' participation. The other strategy is small group discussion (Nataatmadja, Sixsmith, & Dyson, 2007; Cirillo, 2013; Kate, 1999; Rocca, 2010). When the lecturers are applying the strategies in the classroom certainly the lecturer face some difficulties. The difficulties faced by the lecturers are students' motivation, choose a topic, students' preparation (Musthapha et al., 2010). The other difficulties are English skill and unavailability of time (Balla, 2014). The researcher wanted to know the strategies used by the lecturers to increase students' participation in the classroom and their difficulties faced by lecturers in increasing students' participation. To answer the research questions, the researcher applies the theory from the literature review. Their theory is proper for the researchers' research since they discussed the strategy in increasing students' participation. Finally, the framework present in the flowchart below:

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

