

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the benefits of group discussion for students' interpersonal skill. The researcher reports the result of the interview that has been categorized into eight findings. There are two main categories of the findings that is communication skill and relationship-building skill as explained in literature review. These findings are the responses of the research question.

The Benefits of Group Discussion for Students' Interpersonal Skills

In this chapter, the researcher found that group discussion is beneficial for students' interpersonal skill. The participants' responses are based on perceptions and experiences they have. The result showed that the participants obtain nine benefits from the group discussion for their interpersonal skill. There are two main finding namely: Communication skill and relationship-building skill as main of findings. Each finding had sub types, that is, improve oral communication skill, learn nonverbal communication, respect others by listening, do assertive communication, open toward students' diversity, collaborate with others, adapt with others, build trust in others, and influence others.

Improve communication skill. In English Language Education Department (ELED) in one private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia students had group discussion to communicative purpose in sharing information. Students of second/foreign language education programs are considered successful if they

can communicate effectively in the language (Riggenback & Lazaraton, as cited in Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). Communication happens if there are sender of information as a speaker and the receiver information as a listener. In communication skill, there are four sub types findings. The further explanation will explain as follows:

Improve oral communication skill. The first finding of this research is being able to improve oral communication skill. Oral communication is producing sentences in spoken language (Bedwell, et al., 2014). With oral communication, students can deliver their opinion to their friends in a group. Students can practice their oral communication skill in group discussion, as Arin stated, “The group discussion is really helpful in communicating with other friends”. Arin also added, “Group discussion makes me get used to speak with other friends.”

This is similar to Alghamdi research. According to Alghamdi (2014), EFL learners which use small group discussion during cooperative learning got the positive impact after they joined small group discussion. The students learned how to explain their argument to another students in small group discussion of EFL classroom such as transferring or responding to other’ requests for basic information with brief statements, explanation by giving examples, positive interruption, negative interruption and supporting others in the group. Group discussion in EFL classroom helped the students to improve their communication skill.

In addition, Tevdovska (2015) stated that the implementation of group discussion in EFL classroom in higher education, group discussion is one of method of introducing soft skill in ELT context. One of the purpose of this method is to promote communication skill. In line with Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) revealed that group work made the students more communicative. They built friendship by doing group discussion in EFL classroom. The conclusion is group discussion changed the students attitude to be more communicative in ELT in EFL classroom.

Learn nonverbal communication. The second benefit from group discussion for students' interpersonal skill is that they are able to learn non-verbal communication. Didi said that "We also indirectly learn how to use gestures in good and appropriate ways when speaking with others. As example, when I follow group discussion, I use my hand in speaking because it made me more passionate and convincing" Supporting Didi's answer, Bedwell, Fiore and Salas (2014) explained that nonverbal communication is the visual communication by using gestures. Didi used gestures to help the listener understand the information visually. Research by Păstae (2017) stated that activity in phase of listening is observing nonverbal communication such as focusing on gestures. For the example, speakers' hand movement in transferring information to the listener.

Respect others by listening. The third benefit from group discussion for students' interpersonal skill is being able to respect others by listening. Students are sharing the information to get new information from other students. Aning stated that, "Firstly, we can certainly respect each other". Also, Didi said that "In

group discussion, we can understand clearly by asking many questions to our friends. When there is something not understanding clearly, student who understand gives explanation to other students”. In addition, Arin stated that “We are free to speak up our mind, but we have to listen to them first then argue with them”. In short, the students did active listening by listening, analyzing, and giving a response to other students’ opinion in group discussion.

From these statements, being able to respect others by listening to them is a part of active listening. Based on Păstae (2017), the importance of listening makes the students respect other students’ opinions with focus and interest to what the speaker says. By giving close attention, it leads the students to practice their respect. The activity in listening is showing empathy where the students concentrate to understand the expressed point of view in listening other students’ argument. Active listening is important in communication skill in group discussion because this skill is effective to make the discussion interactive.

Do assertive communication. The fourth benefit that the students obtain from discussion for their interpersonal skill is that they are able to perform assertive communication. From that statement, being confident is a part of assertive communication. Arin stated, “I dare to give an opinion”. The students are confident to share their arguments in a group. Arin added that “Yes, so the other people who has given their opinion do not feel neglected due to inappropriate opinion. It can also increase my critical thinking skills. It also helps to make us be more confident to speak in front of people”. In addition, Arin mentioned, “Based on my knowledge, that person was initially an introvert. After

being involved in a small group, she can express her opinion, which results in her gaining more confidence”. Also, when the students find that others’ arguments do not make sense, she defends her argument in the group discussion. Being assertive is the way of the students to articulate their ideas confidently and keep the arguments logical.

Assertive communication is one of the types of interpersonal skill in communication where the students express their feeling or opinion confidently (Bedwell et al., 2014). The students can express their agreement and disagreement to the other group members. In conclusion, being assertive means that the students have strong beliefs in their opinions without thinking whether or not their opinion might be wrong. The students can propose their ideas in a group discussion confidently.

Improve relationship-building skill. Group discussion can not separated in interaction among other students because group discussion consist of two or more of students as team members. Students in group discussion is connected in task or topic of discussion. Building positive relation among other students is important because the students are learning together with other students same task and same group. Group discussion facilitates the students build their social interaction in language learning. The further explanation explains in below:

Open toward students’ diversity. The fifth benefit that the students took from group discussion for their interpersonal skill is open toward students’

diversity. The first diversity is diversity of cultural background. As Didi mentioned that “Group members can understand their diversity, such as their cultural background, and whether their accent is considered soft or harsh”. Aning also stated that “(I) am able to know how to control my emotion in communication”. As the example, students from Kebumen, they speak fast. Some people guess that she was angry. However, in fact their accent influenced by accent from their mother tongue language from her hometown. By this diversity of students background culture, it made other students more open minded as Didi stated that “We are more open-minded and respectful towards the different (ethnic) cultures”. The second diversity is diversity of students’ character in group discussion. Aning stated that “In a group discussion, (I can) understand other people’s characters. Being in a group discussion enable us to see how a person thinks and behaves”.

Based on the two types of diversities, it can be concluded that the students are able to tolerate other students’ background diversity in a group. The students are able to appreciate individual differences and cultural diversity in learning together in a group. Group discussion consists of the different types of students’ characters in a group discussion (Cheruvilil et al., 2014). They explained that the heterogeneity of team member makes the students foster interpersonal practice. The students learned a lot from diversity existing in a group.

In addition, the researcher found another scholarly finding related to diversity in language learning to support this finding. According to Chouinard and Cousins, being open towards diversity, different culture, background, and

languages makes the students have tolerance in intercultural perspectives related to their local language, tradition, and so forth (as cited in Christie, 2012, p.744). In line with that statement, according to Tyler (2017), group discussion in the interpersonal classroom model of diversity makes the students have tolerance when discussing topics about race, religion and sexual orientation. Group discussion makes the students learn diversity in language learning. It can be concluded that learning with various types of students makes them more open and accepting towards diversity in learning together with their friends.

Consequently, by learning diversity in language learning, group discussion made the students more adaptive. As Didi stated that “There, I learn how to deal with a strict person, an obedient person and a stubborn person”. Didi added that “It (group discussion) makes me understand and tolerate more, and I am more familiar with differences. So, I can easily accept other’s opinions”. Moreover, Lily stated that “Group discussion with interaction skill; it depends on how to confront each person in the group”. Lily added that by joining group discussion they could adjust themselves with their friends, as she said, “My interaction skill becomes more adaptive. Meaning that, in a classroom discussion, there are quiet and talkative students. Therefore, when I interact with the quiet students, I communicate with them more slowly”. In addition, Aning stated that “I can put myself into others’ shoes”. The conclusion is open toward diversity in group discussion make the students more tolerance and adaptive in language learning by using group discussion.

Collaborate with others. The sixth benefit that the students obtain from group discussion for their interpersonal skill is being able to collaborate with others. Learning in a group discussion means that students learn together in a group as team players (Cheruvilil et al., 2014). Group discussion provides the students to work together in discussing the same topic. Some participants argued that students cooperate with each other. Didi revealed that, “I also view that a group discussion is effective in giving understanding the discussion topic to ourselves or to others”. Didi also said that “We are familiar with the way to stimulate others to talk in a group”. They share knowledge and experience in a group discussion. It can be concluded that through group discussion, students are able to learn together as team players in one group.

Based on Didi’s statement above, this finding is supported by a research from Meleady, Hopthrow and Crisp (2014) who assert that group discussion promotes cooperative behavior in learning in the classroom. It helps them interact with other students in real-life interactions. Group discussion makes the students responsible to connect and integrate in a group as team players. In other words, students rehearse their teamwork skill by participating in a group discussion. It can be concluded that students are able to collaborate with others in discussing a similar topic after joining group discussions.

Build trust in others. The seventh benefit that the students get from group discussion for their interpersonal skill is that they can build trust in others. Didi stated, “We give trust for other people based on the discussion that we built with others”. Didi gives further explanation that, “So, when each member is assigned

to a certain task, we believe that the person is capable of leadership, that person is capable of writing; so building trust in a group is important". Group discussion consist of several members. Each member has different roles in group discussion. They share roles among group member. It made the students have the integrity in same topic or task in language learning. The students build trust in others by sharing roles in group discussion.

Based on the Didi's answer, Didi can put trust in those other students in a group in order to give opinion and contribution in a group discussion. According to Bedwell, Fiore and Salas (2014), putting trust in others is one of the types of interpersonal skill where students have integrity to finish the task in a group discussion together. Trust means that the students give the belief to other people to give contribution on their ideas to the task. The students can share the task when learning together with their friends. To sum up, trust is the one of the benefits of group discussion, which could also help students to develop their interpersonal skill.

Influence others. The eighth benefit that the students get from discussion for their interpersonal skill is that they could learn on how to influence others. Aning states that, "I can take my service for other people, like I can give them treatment which is suitable with their character. I cannot give treatment strong character (strict on their opinion) with strong argument. Certainly it does not match, like it should be sincere and more understanding of others' character so that I do not do something like this. I can know more on how to treat him/her". Aning explains further, "When there is a presentation, we point out that trusted

person”. Support other students to speak up in public is part of interpersonal trust where the group member lead other students to speak up in public (in front of the classroom).

Based on Aning’s statement, being able to influence others is one of the benefits of interpersonal skill that the students obtain from group discussion. Being able to influence others is the one of the ways that the students can offer help to others in a group discussion. Students can empower each other by supporting other members to speak up. It is called social influence, where the students have a chance to support other friends by leading them into certain behaviours. According to Bedwell, Fiore and Salas (2014), social influence is the way in which students lead other students to act or do a certain behavior. That way, the students can share their opinion and perspectives which will result in other students being more open-minded.