
PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' CHALLENGES IN COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS IN STUDENT-LED DISCUSSION

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration among students is needed to promote students' interdependent and social skills. One of the strategies is by applying Student-Led Discussion. The article discusses how English prospective teachers perceive collaboration among them and their lecturer in the implementation of Student-Led Discussion. This is a report of a Classroom Action Research conducted in TEFL Class. The subject was 45 third semester English students in English Education Department of Teacher Training School of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The teaching strategy was implemented in the class following Kemmis and Taggart' procedures namely, planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. To collect the data, the researcher used observation, interview, and documentation (the scores of the written test). The researcher applied constant comparative to analyze the data in which the results of data analysis in cycle 1 and cycle 2 were compared to make conclusion. In the reflection of phase 1, it was found that the challenges the students encounter were the skills to work and communicate with others, and credit their lecturer more than their peers. The findings showed that discussion requires collaboration skills among the students and between the students and the lecturer. It also needs be well-prepared, monitored, and evaluated.

Keywords: *challenges, collaboration, student-led discussion*

INTRODUCTION

Facing Disruptive Era, prospective teachers should be equipped with communication and collaborative skills. The skills are needed, especially when collaborating with others to solve problems which require a fast, sustainable solution (Chaudhry & Rasool, 2012). As what happened during pandemic in which learning is conducted using online learning system. Teachers should be able to structure collaborative activities, such as monitoring students' group, managing time, organizing materials, determining group norms, and facilitating activities (Le et al., 2018; Gillies, R., & Boyle, 2010; Ruys, I., Van Keer, H., & Aelterman, 2012). In order that the students master the skills they have to be involved in collaborative experience in the learning process. That is why, in English Education Department of Teacher Training School, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, lecturers are assigned to apply collaborative approaches in teaching.

English Education Department of Teacher Training School, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta is one of the institutions that prepare the graduates to become

prospective teachers. Several courses are given to equip them with the ability to manage learning. One of the subjects is TEFL I. TEFL studies methods of ELT. This knowledge is important to be taught to prospective teachers so that they are able to understand the development of TEFL, and the principles in teaching English. The materials taught in the course are English teaching approach, methods, techniques, the features of English traditional and innovative approaches, and current teaching methods in teaching English.

Based on preliminary observations and teaching journal, the lecturer applied traditional learning models (teacher-centered learning) or lecturing, and giving group assignments to submit papers. These strategies resulted in the students' low participation, low motivation, and dependence. The students participated less actively because they depended on the lecturer to obtain the necessary information. Giving assignments to summarize what had been conveyed by the lecturer did not make them think critically and participatively. This was indicated by the final average score of students' abilities to analyze the problems given, which is 50. Besides, in the learning process, students tended to be passive in the learning process. They performed silence and only listen to the information conveyed by the lecturer. Only 20% of students were actively asking questions during the learning process.

Various learning strategies can be applied to elicit students' participation, motivation, and learning autonomy. One of the strategies which can be applied is Student-led Discussion. It is a teaching strategy where students are put into small group and engaged in collaborative activities. This kind of strategy has some strengths. In the process of discussion, the give and gain feedback to solve problems (Wise, 2018). The students share responsibility with others to improve their learning and engagement (Woods, K. & Bliss, 2016). Previous studies found that discussion is fruitful. Discussion encourages students to use higher order thinking skills to analyze problems and identify the relationship between what they learn in class and real life (Svinicki, M., & McKeachie, 2011; McCarron et al., 2021).

This strategy is also believed to be able to increase students' intrinsic motivation in learning (Gambrell, L. B., Hughes, E. M., Calvert, L., Malloy, J. A., & Igo, 2011). Student-Led Discussion was also applied to elicit collaboration skill in a group work (Abdalla, 2011; McMullen, 2014). Collaboration constitutes an indispensable skill for students to face challenges in the 21st century. In Student-led Discussions, students are faced with problems and they must find solutions to the problems given. The problems given can be both real and engineered to encourage them to master the knowledge and efforts that can be taken to elicit problem solving skills. Problem-based learning can be described as a learning model in which students face conceptually structured problems and try to find meaningful solutions. From the advantages of Student-led Discussion, it can be concluded that this method can be applied to overcome the problems faced by lecturers in teaching TEFL.

Based on the explanation above, the lecturer of TEFL implemented Student-led Discussion to foster the students' autonomy, participation, and critical thinking in studying English teaching methods and the problems commonly found in the English teaching. This

article aims to explore the students' perception of the challenges they face when Student-Led Discussion was implemented. The perception is explored in the reflection stage of the four stages in Action Research.

METHOD

This research was conducted at the English Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah University, Surakarta. This research was carried out for six months from August to December 2021 in the odd semester, 2021/2022. The subjects in this study were 45 students of the first semester of English Education Department. This research belongs to the category of Classroom Action Research. The researcher applied the action stages formulated by Kemmis and Taggart (Kemmis, 2009) which consists of stages in the cycle: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting (Planning, Acting, Observing, Reflecting). The activity in each of the stages is discussed in the next paragraph.

Planning was carried out in the beginning of each cycle. In cycle 1, the lecturer designed a lesson plan, prepared the materials given, evaluation, observation guide sheets and interview guides. The implementation of the Student-Led Discussion was one in four meetings in each cycle. The lecturer provided problem topics according to what is written in the lesson Plan. Then the students were divided into small groups (2-3 students. Each group discussed one topic. The students worked together to make presentation slides, record, and upload recorded the presentations on YouTube. Each group should send the YouTube links to WhatsApp Group. Then all students discussed the topic given. In the last stages, evaluation and reflection, the lecturer evaluated the students, asked them to fill in the google form, and interviewed them to make reflection. The students' perception of the challenges they faced in the process of discussion was taken from interview and questionnaire written in the google form. They were taken in the reflection phase in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

The data in this study are field notes, interview scripts, and related documents. These data were obtained from observation, interview with students, questioner and student assignments collected in cycle 1 and cycle 2. The techniques used were tests, interviews, and observations. The instruments used are observation guides, assignments and tests given to students, and interview grids for students. The technique used is source triangulation. The researcher clarifies the data that has been obtained from the results of observations, interviews, and documentation, and then draws conclusions. Data analysis was carried out using quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. Qualitative data were analyzed by reducing the data, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions. The results of the analysis in each cycle were compared. The quantitative data was the score of written tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Classroom Action Research by applying Student-Led Discussion was carried out for two cycles with each cycle carried out in 4 meetings. In the first cycle of the first meeting, the lecturer conducted orientation, discussed the learning contract, and gave a pre-test. The test was carried out by giving several questions that must be answered within 90 minutes. This learning strategy was carried out in two cycles starting from the first week of September 2021. The first meeting was held by giving a pre-test to determine the initial stages of students' knowledge of problems related to English teaching methods. Temporary observation results showed that the average student score was 35. From the results of the evaluation carried out, the average student score was 35 out of a range of 100 marks.

In the second week, the students were given topics related to the traditional methods. In this case, they were divided into small groups of 5 people in one group. The students described the problems given then they study in groups and presented the results that had been studied. Furthermore, lecturers and students from other groups asked questions or provided input. The activity was carried out in week 2 to week 4. In week 5, the lecturer gave a questionnaire as one of the materials to carry out reflection in cycle 2.

Then, the lecturer divided the students into a class consisting of 45 students into five groups, gave orientation about the learning to be carried out, made a lecture contract, and divided the material that must be discussed in each group. Next, the students were asked to find solutions to the problems posed. From the second week to the fourth week, the lecturer used synchronous and asynchronous systems in the learning process. Synchronous was implemented via g-meet and zoom. The asynchronous activities were carried out by using WhatsApp groups to coordinate, and using YouTube in group presentations. Each group was required to present the results of the discussion then uploaded it on social media YouTube. The students from other groups should be invited to clarify and ask questions about the topics discussed.

In the fourth week, the lecturer distributed a google form that must be filled out by students to find out the effectiveness of the learning methods applied. This form contained a reflection of students and the lecturer to make improvements in the second cycle. At the end of this cycle, the lecturer carried out an evaluation to measure the average value of the student's ability results. The results obtained had not reached the specified minimum target of 45. The results obtained showed that only 40 students were active in the discussion, and 50% provided a resume of the results of the discussion. Based on the results of the questionnaire given, the students encountered the challenges in working with others. The following are the challenges faced by the students.

In the process of discussion, students seemed to have fewer collaborative skills. This can be found in the students answer of the question "Do all the members of your group give contribution to the discussion"?

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(Data 11/20) *Ya, tetapi saya rasa kurangimbang/adil. Tidak apa tidak masalah, karena dibalikkesulitan pasti ada kemudahan dansudah terselesaikan* (Yes, but I don't think it's balanced/fair. It doesn't

matter, because behind the difficulties there must be convenience and it's been resolved)

- (Data 11/30) *Kadang bekerja, kadang tidak* (sometimes my peer was active but sometimes not)
- (Data 11/45) *Ada teman tidak memberikan respon meskipun sudah di wa* (One of my friends didn't response even though I sent him/her messages)

Collaboration skill is needed to train students solve problems through interaction, interdependence, sharing roles, planning, making decision, and setting high expectation of learning (Davidsen, J., Ryberg, T., & Bernhard, 2020; Hidayati, 2019; Kuhn, 2015). Data 11/20 show that the students need to have sharing responsibility skills in working with others. While data 11/30 and 11/45 show that the students should have communication skills. Even though the lecturer had discussed the responsibility of each member, but the students still faced problems in sharing the responsibility.

Teachers' structuring activities

In cycle 1, it was found that the students expected the lecturer to actively monitor the process.

- Data (12/1) *sebaiknya dosen memberi point penting di setiap bab, agar kita mudah memahami hal apa saja yang ada di bab tersebut* (the lecturer should give important points in each chapter, so that we can easily understand what is in that chapter)
- Data (12/5) *Guru menjelaskan terlebih dahulu tentang materi tersebut, percuma jika mahasiswa diminta membuat presentasi kemudian di sampaikan kepada teman-temannya padahal kami sendiri tidak mengerti tentang materinya. Dan kami juga bakal merasa "yang penting udah mengerjakan tugas dan sudah mempresentasikannya". Dan juga buat teman-teman yang nanya, khususnya saya terkadang tidak mencerna pertanyaan dan jawaban yang lain, dikarenakan pertanyaan dan jawabannya sudah ketumpuk-tumpuk. Mungkin jika bapak dosen sedikit membantu menjawab pertanyaan nya, tetapi belum tentu membuat mahasiswa lain mengerti dengan jawabannya* (The teacher explains first about the material, it is useless if students are asked to make a presentation and then convey it to their friends even though we ourselves do not understand the material. And we will also feel "the important thing is that you have done your assignment and presented it". And also for friends who ask, especially I sometimes don't digest other questions and answers, because the questions and answers are piled up. Maybe if the lecturer helps answer the question a little, but it doesn't necessarily make other students understand the answer)
- Data (12/13) *Dosen menjelaskan kembali materi yang sdh dipresentasikan agar lebih jelas* (The lecturer re-explains the material that has been presented to make it clearer)

(Data 12/22) *ketika ada sesi tanya jawab, lalu dosen yang menjawabnya saya jadi paham, namun ketika teman saya yang menjawab saya masih kurang paham di beberapa diskusi, oleh karena itu saya berharap kepada dosen mengklarifikasi jawaban teman teman itu benar tidaknya, jadi benar tidaknya diberi simbol. biar pasti.* (when there was a question and answer session, then the lecturer who answered it I understood, but when my friend answered I still didn't understand in some discussions, therefore I hoped that The lecturer would clarify whether the answers were correct or not, so whether it was correct or not, it was given a symbol. Let's be sure)

Data 12/1 and data 12/5 show that the lecturer should be able to organize materials and monitor the group work. In Data 12/13 and Data 12/22, the students trust their lecturer more than their peers. This is similar to the previous study which showed that in peer feedback, students did not credit their peers with the same trust as they did their teacher (Andrée, 2019; Harris, L. R., 2013).

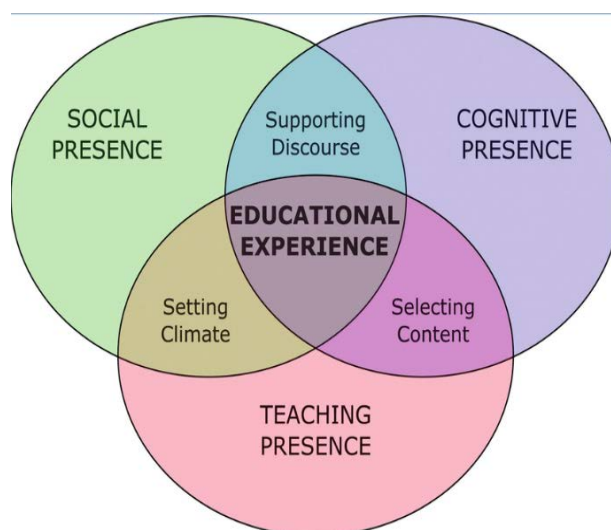
In this second cycle, the lecturer provided conclusions and additional information about the material discussed by the students. Because the responses given to students were carried out at the end of the cycle, the lecturer was late in getting information about the difficulties or obstacles faced by students in the learning process. To overcome this problem, lecturer used a bonus question strategy by asking students' difficulties or listening to what students need to make learning easier. Therefore, there were two things that must be improved for the implementation of cycle 2, namely: providing additional information and conclusions on the material discussed and providing bonus questions. The results of the questionnaire distributed to students showed that 54% of students did not like this strategy. After the lecturer observed, it turned out that the students felt that there was minimal feedback given by the lecturer. They needed an explanation from the lecturer whether the things discussed were true or not.

In the second cycle, the lecturer implemented a Student-Led Discussion with improvements to the provision of input and conclusions as well as additional questions (bonus questions) given at the end of the student attendance google form. After four meetings, it was found that the average score achieved was 71. Student participation reached 78%, and independence reached 80% (as seen from the collection of individual student assignments to reflect on the results of the discussions carried out).

Based on the results of observations, tests, and surveys via google form, it was found that the Student-Led Discussion strategy could increase student independence and participation in TEFL. Of the various procedures written in learning theory, this strategy can be maximized if the lecturer provides maximum feedback and listens to the difficulties faced by students as soon as possible. This is showed by the low mastery of students on the concepts discussed in virtual meetings because lecturer did not know what students were complaining about.

In line with the concept of Community of Inquiry (CoI), students will gain meaningful knowledge if cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence can support the creation of learning experiences. This concept was first introduced by

C.S. Peirce, a pragmatic philosopher, John Dewey, and Jane Addams. Initially this model was developed to solve problems in scientific investigation. The concept carried out in model is an exploratory guide for the use of blended learning by focusing on the process and learning outcomes that are formed in a coherent and accurate manner.



Gambar Community of Inquiry Model Adapted from Garrison and Anderson (2003)

In this model there are parts which when combined form slices that end in the creation of a student learning experience. These main elements include social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. Cognitive Presence: is the extent to which students are able to construct and confirm meaning through continuous reflection and discourse. Teaching Presence refers to the design, facilitation, and direction of social and cognitive processes for the purpose of realizing relevant learning outcomes (Anderson, T., L. Rourke, 2001). Social Presence: is the ability of participants to project their individual personality to identify and communicate with society and develop interpersonal relationships (Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, 2000).

As it is found in the findings that social presence relates to the way the students and the teacher communicate and collaborate. The students' active engagement in the discussion process creates positive climate which enable them learn maximally. Student engagement constitutes a pivotal element which creates positive school climate. Studies often relates it to academic achievement. Students' engagement supports the students' individual learning process and learning quality. In Student-Led Discussion, the learning centered on students; they are given a task to lead group discussions in each meeting. They have to organize, present the topic given, and discuss it in an academic forum. This kind of teaching strategy encourages them to be collaborative and responsible for the results they attempted (Gabriel Velez, 2020).

The implementation of Student-Led Discussion would be maximal as the lecturer played his role as facilitator. As an educator, teachers should be able to structure

collaborative activities, such as monitoring students' group, managing time, organizing materials, determining group norms, and facilitating activities (Le et al., 2018; Gillies, R., & Boyle, 2010; Ruys, I., Van Keer, H., & Aelterman, 2012). The results showed that the lecturer should prepare the strategy, actively monitor the discussion, and make reflection in the end of each meeting. It proves that collaboration occur not only among the students but also between the students and the lecturer.

The results of this study support the previous findings. Research shows that Student-Led Discussion is useful for increasing learner participation in the discussion process. The questions asked their peers encourage learners to think (Chen et al., 2019). In this case, peer facilitators are believed positively correlated with the use of higher order level cognitive presence. In addition to encouraging learners to use higher-order thinking skills, this learning strategy can increase students participation in the teaching and learning process (Mills, 2015; (Rao, 2010; Paff, 2015). Rao found that students in his class gain confidence as they brought topics familiar for them. In this case, there is students' increased involvement since the topic was authentic (Rao, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that Student-Led Discussion can be implemented to develop students' collaborative, communicative skills, and responsibility. In order that the students master the skills, the lecturer is required to well-prepare the discussion, monitor the process, and make reflection in each meeting. Monitoring the process of discussion is needed in order that the lecturer can solve problems faced. Identifying the problems faced by the students can be done in the end of each meeting. One of the ways is using bonus questions. The lecturer does not need to wait for the students to respond for several meetings. In addition, the lecturer should listen carefully to the students' discussion. They need to clarify whether they really understand the materials or not.

The finding above implies that in a teaching and learning process, collaboration skill is needed by both students and teachers. Students' role and responsibility in each group should be communicated well. Students' collaborative skill should be explicitly taught to them. Teacher should also be able to prepare and monitor the discussion process well. The lecturer should be creative in finding a solution to the problems found the class. While the students should be more autonomously finding many resources of knowledge. For the next researchers, this article can become a preliminary research to design a model of collaboration in teaching.

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