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Learner and Instructor's Perception on Discussion Technique in ELT

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate on how to optimize discussion technique. This is a descriptive qualitative study. The data gained through open ended interview and processed by using data reduction, display data, and conclusion drawing/verification. This study answered two research question. What is the students' perception on how discussion will be effectively implemented? and What is the teachers' perception on how discussion will be effectively implemented? The result shows that learning styles in discussion found to be important to consider on how the teacher should treat the students and what teaching technique is best to match their need. The standard of participating in discussion not only when students giving opinion it further whether the students pay attention in discussion. Not only the seating setting is important but also the number of students should be considered on how to implement better discussion class. Learning styles do affect what treatment should be given to the students. Teacher lack affection shows the ineffectiveness of the discussion. Therefore, discussion is considered to be effective if it meets some standards of its effectiveness.

Keywords: Discussion, Perception, Effective

Introduction

Teaching methodology endlessly developed to ease students learning activity, specially in learning English, students participation necessarily escalated. As the result, teacher nowadays give more focus on what method they need to implement in class. In the process of learning, the role of teacher is critically important. If teachers do not carefully give more focus on how student follow teachers' intructions, the learning process would not occur within students (Nasmilah, 2018). Therefore, the methods applied by teachers expected to get all students participation.

In general, classroom participation requires students to interact in the classrooms to indicate that they are learning and paying attention (Ak, 2011). Furthermore, students often display their willingness to participate in oral discussion, but opportunities are not adequately available for all students due to some issues related to classroom context, including time allotted for teaching and teacher-fronted activities. Students participation not only valued by their contribution toward giving opinion during the discussion. According to Warayet (2011) achieving participation in the classroom relies not only on the ability to participate orally, but also non-orally using different signals of embodied action. This finding shows that it is a definite

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matter that teacher need to be capable of assessing students' participation. Furthermore, in order the teacher to effectively obtain an effective teaching, discussion method has currently been implemented. One best teaching methodology to espouse students' interaction is by applying discussion based-class model.

Discussion is an engagement in and a practice of the activities of thought and communication. As a teaching methodology, discussion has two major function as follows, (1) discussion as a method of instruction, where the purpose is to help engage students in a lesson by sparking a reaction, making analogies, bringing alternative ideas to the topic, or making them think a little bit more instead of just regurgitating information, whatever the subject matter of the lesson might be; and (2) discussion competence as the subject matter as the desired outcome of instruction and an end in itself (Larson, 2000). Discussion therefore often becomes the right choice in formulating an effective teaching.

Furthermore, in sending forth an effective teaching and learning process, it is fundamentally important to recognize how students learn. When teachers and students understand how they learn and their preferred ways to learn, the probability for learning increases (Hayen, 2006). Students learn in many ways— by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorizing and visualizing and drawing analogies and building mathematical models; steadily and in fits and starts (R. Felder, L. Silverman). It shows how basically learning happened within students themselves. Moreover, it is also notable to cognize vital reasons why learning style is matter, First of all, people's learning styles will vary because everyone is different from one another naturally. Secondly, it offers the opportunity to teach by using a wide range of methods in an effective way. Sticking to just one model unthinkingly will create a monotonous learning environment, so not everyone will enjoy the lesson. In other words, learning and teaching will be just words and not rooted in reality. Thirdly, we can manage many things in education and communication if we really recognize the groups we are called to (Gilakjani and Branch, 2012).

Students' perception inherently reflects what learning styles the students possess and practice. Taking students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness is very important element of measuring teacher effectiveness. Students are the first stakeholders who have direct knowledge about classroom practices on a regular basis. The importance of knowing what makes students conveniently learn is because it determines either the students participate or not and it surely affects students' learning outcomes. Akram, Naseem, and Ahmad, (2016) Describing relationship between students' perceptions of teaching effectiveness and students' achievement will offer teachers recommendations that will be supportive to revising their teaching strategies. Therefore, it is essential to match students' and teacher's perspective in applying teaching method.

Methods

This research uses qualitative research type. Qualitative research is a method of exploring and understanding the meaning that by some individuals or groups of people ascribed to social or humanitarian problems (Creswell, 2010). The type used in this research is descriptive research. Descriptive research is limited to an attempt to express a problem or situation or event as it is so as to reveal facts and provide an objective picture of the true state of the object under study. Objects studied is discussion technique that teacher used as teaching instruction in high school in Pinrang, south sulawesi. Data collection techniques used in this study is Interviews, namely direct interviews to informants students and teachers.

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Data analysis techniques in this study using Miles and Huberman model that suggests that the activities in qualitative data analysis done interactively and continuously and until completed, so that the data is saturated. Activities in data analysis, namely data reduction, display data, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Result and Discussion

Major students claimed that having a preparation before the discussion is essentially important. The preparation includes the material that should be prepared before the discussion, teacher specific explanation on what should be learnt about. It was stated that preparing the material would ease students in discussing and possibly indemnify a tough discussion.

"I think before the discussion we need to prepare the material and teacher need to explain what will be discussed to make the discussion more organized".

Other students explicitly said that it is important to read and master the material as well as decide the role of each member of the group to help the discussion more efficient and each student will have their own opportunity to speak during the discussion.

"I think, reading material and master it as well as giving role to each member of presenting group".

The rest stated that what is more important to prepare before discussion is mentality which support their willingness in giving ideas, opinion, and questions.

"before discussion, what we need is mentality because if do not have braveness, we will lose in discussion".

Student justification also stated about the standard of participating in discussion. Most of students stand on the same line, it was stated that to be given credit participating, discussion requires students to have questions and opinion. Students is not considered participating if only remaining in silent.

"I think, I am participating when active give opinion and ask question"

"it is when we are active give opinion"

The rest stated the opposite, that participating in discussion does not always mean to give question or opinion.

"I think although students do not speak during discussion still participate because not all students can be confident to give opinion but as long as the pay attention means participating".

Physical setting like the seating setting in the class have a huge impact on students' behavior which surely influences the discussion and students' participation. The students commonly agree that having a wrong seating setting would affect them as well as the teacher and claim that the appropriate one is the U form.

"the best seating setting is the U form because the students who are usually active just those who sit in the front line if using regular setting. If U for all can be active because face to face and shy if not offer question or opinion".

"I believe the seating setting is very important because the teacher can see and judge whether the students involve or not and I think the best one is the U form".

The rest added that not only seating setting is impactful in the physical setting but also the number of students in discussion have a discernible influence in discussion. what support the discussion efficient is because all students are easy to organize and control.

"I believe the number of participant will also determine whether the discussion effective or not".

Another important aspect that students engaged is whether ¹⁵ it is important for the teacher to notice the learning style. The students entirely claimed that it is critical for the teacher to notice because teacher will know how to treat the students and what the students' weakness are.

"very important, if not, it is useless to study if we do not understand the material being taught because the teaching technique teacher use is not suitable with the students".

"I need to be treated well in class, like sometimes it is a bit hard for me to understand the material being discussed, I always need the teacher explanation".

Students' perception also implies their demand on teacher performance. It was stated that teacher need to facilitate and direct, clarify the misunderstanding or missing ideas or details to the students once having the discussion done, offer question when finding the discussion stuck and notice the students during the process of discussion to judge, value and give treatment.

¹⁷ Teachers' perception on the effectiveness of discussion technique.

Teacher perception on preparation before the discussion class. It was stated that teacher need to prepare interesting material to be discussed to make the students willingly involve in the discussion, asking the students to read the material before the class and specifically explain what should be discussed about to keep the discussion in track.

"I need to inform the students about what will be discussed so that they can prepare and perform better in the discussion. I need to explain the discussion main question because it helps me to find the students in their best performance".

In the standard of participation, teacher stated that they are participating when giving opinion and answer related questions as well as share their opinion but in some cases, teacher has less time to have all the students speaking because teacher need to take role in the class.

"normally I consider them participating if they offer question or provide answers but we are limited by time as well as I need to re-explain the material and make sure there is no missing detail or misunderstanding within the students".

Seating setting also become teachers' concern because they find it hard to get instruct and get all students attention due to their inability to have a full sight of the students and claim that the best seating setting to have is the U form.

“in class, even the teacher finds it hard to control and get all student attention, it is because seating setting do not enable to have full sight of my students, and the U form is the best one to begin with”

Teacher continued their belief on students' learning styles. To address an exact treatment because teacher will at least have a standard of their students' ability.

“by noticing I will know students' ability, I think knowing students' ability is essential to make me as a teacher put minimum standard of students' achievement as well as letting me make a good discussion class with putting more focus to those who really need it”.

Regarding students' expectation on teacher, teacher perception on how the teacher must perform in discussion class. It was stated that the teacher need to make an outline on the board to make the discussion in track so the students would know what first need to discuss. Offering question once they find the class stuck due to lack of question or explaining the material to open the students' point of view. Notice which students not active and give exact treatment for them by encouraging the students to speak.

“I need to have a note on the board relating to discussion in order to keep the discussion in track. Offer question to the presenting group when the discussion stuck. At the end of the discussion I need to clarify some missing points or misunderstanding”.

Class preparation

Based on the finding, both teacher and students agree that preparation including reading material as well as explanation on what is the specific information should be learnt to support the discussion are necessary to have before discussion. It is in line with what Welty (2000) that the more thinking and reading students do about the assigned material, the better prepared students will be for the discussion about it. Furthermore, based on the finding on students' perception, it is also important to divide role within the member of presenting group so that the student can focus on what part they need to explain. Mentality also need to be noticed because it has a huge effect toward the students' performance in group. Some students are lacking in their mentality, and this type of students usually hardly involve in discussion. It can be concluded that teacher need a more specific preparation within the students to ensure the discussion effectiveness.

Standard of participation

Based on the finding, students mostly agree that participating means active to give questions and opinion. And some students claim that as long as pay attention to the discussion means participating. It is in accordance with Warayet (2011) *achieving participation in the classroom relies not only on the ability to participate orally, but also non-orally using different signals of embodied action*. But what teachers stated that in a context of discussion teacher need time to explain the discussion, the missing detail and clarify misunderstanding during discussion that affects the discussion duration in class which result to some students not having opportunities to speak as well as students stated it is hard to participate because they are not confident enough to speak. Those imply that students still participate even if not giving opinion but as long as they follow and pay attention means they participate.

Classroom physical setting

Based on the finding, both teacher and students believe that the seating setting have big affection in discussion and the best one is the U shape. It is in line with Welty (2000) that the U shape is the single most important environmental factor. It allows all the participants to see each other and promote interchange. Students in addition claimed the number of participant in class also affect the duration, students' opportunity to speak, and teacher ability in organizing the class. This finding does not rebut Welty claims but adds more specific information on the physical setting in the discussion.

Students Personality

The finding shows that both students and teacher believe it is important for the teacher to understand the students' personality including learning style, ability and characteristic in order to help teachers treat the students in their best performance. It is in accordance with (Hayen, 2006) in sending forth an effective teaching and learning process, it is fundamentally important to recognize how students learn. When teachers and students understand how they learn and their preferred ways to learn, the probability for learning increases.

Teacher's performance

The finding shows students' demands on teacher's performance in discussion and in response the teacher has already performed even beyond students' expectation on what teacher should do in discussion. It derives a conclusion that, teacher has less affection on discussion technique. Therefore, discussion is finally found less effective since in class the teacher play an important role and their affection determine how effective to students learning outcome.

Conclusion

Learning styles in discussion found to be important to consider on how the teacher should treat the students and what teaching technique is best to match their need. The standard of participating in discussion not only when students giving opinion it further whether the students pay attention in discussion. Not only the seating setting is important but also the number of students should be considered on how to implement better discussion class. Learning styles do affect what treatment should be given to the students. And finally, teacher lack affection shows the ineffectiveness of the discussion.

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