

GROUP DISCUSSION AND ICTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH IN LARGE CLASSES

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Abstract: *This study was concerned with Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs) and Group Discussion (GD) that become one of the most effective solutions to the problem. Universitas Bumigora has numerous students in one class in which each class consists of approximately 50-60 students. The aims of this study were to identify students' perspectives on GD and ICTs and to compare men and women's perspectives on GD and ICTs in large classes which were conducted into two big classes. The instrument in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to get information about the students' responses to the application of FGD and ICTs in teaching and learning English and to identify the differences responses between man and women group. The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.. Based on the results, the students believed that group discussion and ICTs belong to "very good" and "good" with range score 3.11-3.44.*

Keywords: *ICTs, Group discussion, Teaching English*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, all sectors such as education, company, and other sectors use English as one of the requirements to get involved in the institution. Therefore, numerous people learn English even from childhood. English as a second or foreign language is one of the main languages in the world that is learned by people throughout the world,

including Indonesia. English as an international language is needed by people for many reasons such as getting married, looking for jobs, continuing study abroad, and other reasons.

Universitas Bumigora made some policy to have English as a compulsory subject in two semesters: in the first and the second semester. It is because English as an International

language is needed today, especially for free trade and ASEAN Economic Community or called MEA in Indonesia. English is used by most people throughout the world because of the demands. Consequently, many universities formulated the rules in order to English as a compulsory subject in the university. Indonesia has a rule that English as a partial requirement for graduating from junior high school and senior high school. The University of Helsinki, Finland, states that based on its Language Policy promulgated in Finnish, Swedish, and English, 14 March 2007:

Languages are a resource within the academic community. The bilingual and multilingual environment and internationalization are sources of enrichment for all and are a necessity for the international comparability of its research performance.

Similarly, According to Hang (170, p. 2009) based on Vietnam's history witnesses the blooming of each foreign language in its own era, with different reasons for prominence and slightly different effects on Vietnam". Everyone needs language and even international language that is a

bridge for people to communicate and to express their feeling, ideas, and thought. However, acquiring a second language or foreign language is different from acquiring the first language in which learning second/foreign language is more complicated and challenging.

Teaching English, especially for young learners, is challenging because teachers must provide and/or use numerous strategies, media, models, and the others to attract them to learn. Moreover, when teachers teach English in big classes. Creativity and appropriate media should be paid attention to teachers. Numerous scholars believe that ICTs are embedded in our life and it has an effect on classroom management. Many types of research stated that ICTs have a crucial effect on the teaching and learning process, including learning English. Based on the elaboration of the background there are two research questions: what is students' response to learning English using Group Discussion and what are students' response to learning English using ICTs? This study aims at identifying students' responses to learning English through

Group Discussion and ICTs.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

English in Teaching and Learning

Teaching language, particularly second language or foreign language, is complicated because either intelligent (internal) aspect and non-intelligent (external) aspect should be considered. Both aspects have a big role in students' success in learning the language. Kong (2009, p. 145) mentioned that external factors such as motivation, attitude, interests, age, methods, willingness, and character have important factors for English learning. Students' success (achievement or performance) are affected also by those external factors involving learning style and motivation. Griggs & Dunn (1984); Smith and Renzulli (1998); and Wallance and Oxford (1992) reported that "match between teaching style and students' preferred learning style will increase learner's motivation and learning" (Hiew, 2012, p.10).

Giving input has a pivotal role in teaching English. The more teachers give input, the more the students have the opportunity to succeed. Input is one of the tools to measure the students' success in learning English

and it is one of the main factors to improve students' performance. Ellis (2003, p. 5) said that "language learning cannot occur without some input". Using Information and technology are supposed as one of the most effective ways to give students input in learning English.

During the teaching and learning process, a lecture gives instruction and explanation by using two languages (bilingual) namely mother tongue and English. Bilingual may help students to understand well of the instruction and explanation. UNESCO (2003 cited in Philipson, 2009, p. 22-23) noted the value of mother-tongue based bilingual education as follows:

- a. UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.
- b. UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.
- c. UNESCO supports language as an

essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding.

Class Size

Certain class size and students' performance have a close relationship. Even though pros and cons appear related to the results of the research where Hancock (1996) and Kennedy & Siegfried (1997) reported that no relationship between class size and students' performance but Gibbs, Lucas, & Simonite (1996); Borden & Burton (1999); and Arias & Walker (2004) assumed on the contrary (Carpenter, 2006: 14). In a real classroom, teachers certainly face and feel that class size has an implication to the students' results and performance.

Small class size is easier to manage, observe, and organize than large class size. Consequently, teachers should provide other alternative methods to create good condition when they teach in big classes in order to become a well-managed classroom. A well-managed classroom has a positive role in teaching English and students' performance. As stated by Freeman,

Anderman, & Jensen (2007) (cited in Kazemi & Soleimani, 2016, p.88) "A well-managed classroom generate a stress-free environment where positive learning is experienced and students feel an increased sense of belonging to the classroom."

Group Discussion

An expression that often to say is "two is better than one". That means learning in a group is probably more effective than alone. The discussion has a positive effect to boost and encourage the student's motivation to learn and speak. Rahman, et.al (2011, p.87) stated that "discussion is one of the most widely used and valuable methods in teaching and of social studies". Moreover, in large classes, this method can be very useful to be applied. It is still in Rahman et.al also described the following objectives of discussion (Gage and Berliner, 1988): thinking critically, democratic skills, complex cognitive objectives, speaking ability, ability to participate, and attitude change.

The objectives of group discussion are relevant to the goals of teaching second or foreign languages because learning English for the non-English department is focused on

speaking skill and build critical thinking of the students. Group discussion can elicit and encourage the students to speak and build their cognitive skill. The group discussion can use collaborative learning with videos, music, or any other media. Pozo, Gomes-Pablos, & Munoz-Repiso (2017, p.4) noted that the implementation of collaborative learning or group discussion would be pairs/groups, sharing responsibilities, negotiating, discussing, and contributing their ideas to gain objectives of learning such as a project, a task, or the others.

Information and Communication Technologies

ICTs including music, video, pictures, slides, and the others have a crucial role in teaching and English learning process. ICT can create a good environment for communication between students and teachers or among students. As stated by Gajek (2015, p. 2) "ICT provides an environment for communication of language learners". There are some advantages using IT in teaching and learning process as follows (Floris 2015, p. 141):

1. Either students and teachers can

access more quickly and the most update sources and information related to the materials.

2. Both teachers and students can practice English by listening to the pronunciation from their handphone or internet.

3. Many focused exercises can be found on the net for free and software can be bought via the Internet or in any store and some are free.

4. There are also many discussion groups for professional development, interactive reading books for students, sound recordings for both teachers and students.

5. There are a lot of materials available can be chosen on the internet by teachers and it can be downloaded freely.

Flourish added that teachers or students can find and download plenty of authentic materials, for instance, online newspaper, webcasts, video clips, or even video-sharing websites such as YouTube from the internet. The authenticity is based on the environment and a real life; the issues of the topic are taken from the real condition in the society as Dewi (2017, p.153) stated that "To create the classroom becomes in real life,

we need to provide variety of activities from the real world outside the classroom”. Then either students or teachers can select materials that fit better to their wants, necessities, and needs. Everyone can be benefited by technology for teaching and learning. Florish also believes that ICT provided by a chat room and virtual environment (second life) are able to motivate them to practice the written and spoken language without fearing mistakes.

Gender is considered to be one of the considerations in teaching language because “language reflects the internal cognitive and emotional process” (Milanowicz & Bokus, 2013, p.424). gender is constructed by social of community. Luyt (2015) stated that gender is considered by social norms and also as the individual (p.209).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is classified into a Mix Research study as proposed by Creswell. This research is based on mix research using a questionnaire as a quantitative method and interview as a qualitative method. The questionnaire will distribute to students to gain information of their

perspectives of implementation of Group Discussion and Information and Communication Technologies

Research Location

This research was conducted in Bumigora University in the first semester who gain English subject. There are two classes that will be taken as samples of this research.

Technique of Data Collection

a. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire will be distributed to students to gain information about their perception of the Group Discussion and Information and Communication Technologies in teaching and learning English in large classes. The questionnaire is developed from some theories that related to Group Discussion and Information and Communication Technologies theories.

b. Interview

Not only the questionnaire will be distributed to the students as the instruments to gain information but also interview is one of the pivotal ways to obtain data. The interview is one of the main instruments needed in this research to investigate and gain specific information. Semi-structure interview will be used in conducting interview with the students. The interview guide contains some questions related to Group Discussion and ICTs and clarified their responses in the interview.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data analysis is a process of organizing, sifting, summarizing, and synthesizing of the data collected until obtaining the data and driving conclusions of the research. The data collected will be analyzed in different ways that are quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data will be gained from the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics are used to analyse the questionnaire of the data. While the qualitative data are obtained from the results of interviews, comments, feedback, and suggestions gained from students. The range of the score used by the

researcher is the one proposed by Suharto (2006:52-53) as follows.

$$R = \frac{Xh - Xl}{4}$$

R = range
Xh = highest score
Xl = lowest score
4 = likert scale (the amount)

The data conversion range is based on the data obtained from the research. The highest score is 4 and the lowest score is 1. The calculation is as follows:

$$R = \frac{Xh - Xl}{4}$$

$$R = \frac{4 - 1}{4} = 0,75$$

In summary, based on the calculation, the class interval are presented in Table 3.1.

Scale	Interval of the mean values	The other form of the interval	Category
1	1.00 – 1.75	$1.00 \leq \bar{X} \leq 1.75$	Bad
2	1.76 – 2.51	$1.76 \leq \bar{X} \leq 2.51$	Fair
3	2.52 – 3.27	$2.52 \leq \bar{X} \leq 3.27$	Good
4	≥ 3.28	$\bar{X} \geq 3.28$	Very Good

Adapted from: Suharto (2006: 61)

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A large classroom becomes one of the biggest challenges in teaching and learning the language. Therefore, the author conducted research to solve the problem by applying ICT and group discussion in the classroom.

Group Discussion in Large Classes

Group discussion was conducted by dividing the students into ten groups and each group consisted of approximately 5-7 persons. During one semester they will study and sit down in their group. The students will provide some materials and they will discuss each other. Sometimes, the lecture provides a game to empower the groups, such as the game of tree diagram. Every two groups will join the competition in which they will write English words (vocabularies) as many as possible. They can discuss with their group and the group who get most words to be a winner. From the activity, each group is enthusiastic because they race to be a winner. The faster group accomplish the assignment, the better they will be. Having looked at a number of problems of teaching in a large class, we should consider group discussion as one part of the solution. Based on the students' responses, they believed that group discussion has a positive effect on teaching and learning and also to the students' performance. The quantitative data show that the students believe that group discussion is able to give me a big opportunity to

practice English in the classroom. It is suggested by the mean value of that statement is 3.44 that belongs to “very good”. It is the same as the statement (2), (3), and (6) with the mean value 3.36, 3.46, and 3.36. They said that group discussion also can motivate and stimulate them to learn and speak English by categorizing as “good” with mean value 3.11 and group discussion is able to help the students to comprehend the materials with mean score 3.22. The students' responses are shown in Table 2.

Table 4.2: Students' Responses of Group Discussion

No	Statement	Mean Value	Category
1	Group discussion is able to give me a big opportunity to practice English in classroom.	3.44	Very good
2	Group discussion is able to help me to increase my English skills.	3.36	Very good
3	Group discussion is able to make me learn speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation.	3.46	Very good
4	Group discussion comprehend the materials.	3.22	Good
5	Group discussion motivate me to learn English.	3.11	Good
6	Group discussion is able to help me to enrich my vocabularies.	3.36	Very good

The Use of ICTs in Large Classes

The students are divided into groups as explained in the previous explanation. Learning English using ICTs are believed to give a positive contribution to teaching and learning English. During the teaching and learning process, the lecturer used ICTs in teaching and learning through pictures, videos, and songs. The lecturer provided some pictures, videos, and songs where first of all some pictures are provided in slides to elicit them to speak. After showing pictures, the students are asked to speak or make a story based on the picture. Sometimes, the lecturer gives songs and asked them to fill the missing lyric. Then, some new vocabularies will be part of our discussion. It means that while they listening, the students also can sharpen their reading and writing and even their speaking skills because some students are asked to make sentences by using new vocabularies in the song. Afterward, showing some videos, for example, a video “the six blind men and the elephant” evoke their motivation in learning English. Videos as a trigger for the students to motivate them to listen, read, write,

and speak. Every group has the same opportunity to get those skills. ICT-based task: maximize the use of time in the teaching and learning process because writing too much in a whiteboard will waste the time. Therefore, by using ICT in providing explanation and task, the teachers are able to utilize the time well. The students’ responses to using ICTs in large classes are displayed in Table 2.

Table 4.2. Students’ Responses of the use of ICTs in Large Classes

No	Statement	Mean Score	Category
1	Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are able to give me a big opportunity to practice English in classroom.	3.27	Good
2	Information Communication Technologies (ITCs) are able to make me learn speaking, reading, writing, and pronunciation.	3.28	Very good
3	Information Communication Technologies (ITCs) are able to help me to increase my English skills.	3.16	Good
4	Information Communication Technologies (ITCs) are able to stimulate and motivate me to learn English.	3.23	Good
5	Information Communication Technologies (ITCs) are able to help me to enrich my vocabularies.	3.35	Very good

In terms of the students’ responses to using ICTs in classrooms belong to “very good” and “good”. They believe that ICTs are able to make the students learn all skills (speaking, reading, writing, listening, and pronunciation) with the mean score 3.28 and it can enrich the students’ vocabularies (3.35). Three of the statements got “good” response” with mean score 3.27, in which they stated that ICTs are able to give me a big opportunity to practice English in classroom; ITCs can help the students to increase their English skills with a total score of 3.16; and they believe that ICTs can motivate the students to learn English with an average score of 3.23.

Related to students’ responses to using videos in teaching and learning English, they responded that learning English using videos are “very good”. The students believed that they are able to encourage them to learn English and enrich their vocabularies with the same mean score of 3.35. Then using videos can help them to comprehend the materials with a mean score of 3.28. For more detailed of the responses can be seen in Table 3.

Table 4.3: Students’ Responses of Using Videos

No	Statement	Mean Score	Value
1	Learn English using videos are able to stimulate and motivate me to learn English.	3.35	Very good
2	Learn English using videos are able to help me to enrich my vocabularies.	3.35	Very good
3	Learn English using videos are able to help me to comprehend the materials.	3.28	Very good

In terms of using songs in classrooms, it has “good” and “very good” responses. Table 4 shows that songs are able to motivate the students to learn and enrich their vocabularies with an average score of 3.44 and 3.38. The students’ response to using song are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4.4: Students’ Responses of Using Songs

No	Statement	Mean Score	Value
1	Learn English using songs are able to stimulate and motivate me to learn English.	3.44	Very good
2	Learn English using songs are able to help me to enrich my vocabularies.	3.38	Very good
3	Learn English using songs are able to help me to comprehend the materials.	3.12	Good

Cameron (2001) said that developing songs into language learning task can help students and teachers for language learning and teaching and Jolly (1975) stated: “using songs can also give learners the opportunity to acquire a better

understanding of the culture of the target language” (Millington, 2011, pp.136-137). Playing songs in classroom evoke the students to learn because they feel comfortable listening to music while studying.

The students’ responses to using picture are showed in Table 5. Based on the data in Table 5 show that using pictures in the classroom have the response from the students with the “good” category. It is showed by the mean score (3.17) for being able to stimulate the students; they can be motivated by learning English using pictures (3.16), and learning English using pictures are able to help them comprehend the materials with mean score 3.15.

Table 4.5: Students’ Responses of Using Pictures

No	Statement	Mean Score	Value
1	Learn English using pictures are able to stimulate and motivate me to learn English.	3.17	Good
2	Learn English using pictures are able to help me to enrich my vocabularies.	3.16	Good
3	Learn English using pictures are able to help me to comprehend the materials.	3.15	Good

Pictures have a positive

influence on the students’ motivation and performance to elicit them to speak because they have a description and guide to make sentences.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

English as a second or foreign language is one of the main languages learned by people throughout the world, including Indonesia. English as an international language is needed by people for many reasons such as getting married, looking for jobs, continuing study abroad, and other reasons. A large class is very complicated and has a big challenging in teaching and learning English. Group discussion and ICTs through pictures, songs, and videos have positive effect to motivate the students, to help the students to enrich their vocabularies, and help them to comprehend the materials. Based on the students’ responses, they believed that group discussion and ICTs belong to “very good” and “good” with the range score of 3.11-3.44.

Suggestions

Findings of this research have some implications in terms of practice, understanding, theories, and even

policy as follows:

1. For Bumigora University (institution), this research results give contributions for the institution for better teaching and learning process.
2. For the researchers, the results of this research is to motivate the researcher to conduct other researches related to Information and Technology Information (ICTs) and Group Discussion (GD).

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