

## INDONESIAN EFL LEARNER'S PROBLEMS TO HAVE A CLASSROOM DISCUSSION IN THE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

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### Abstract

Active learning and classroom discussion have been the current trend in language teaching nowadays. However, there are some English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners who live in a country where they barely conduct the classroom discussion, such as Indonesia. This study focuses on what problems that the Indonesian EFL learners face when they are having a classroom discussion by using qualitative research. The participants of this study were the college students whom they were given questionnaire and interviewed regarding classroom discussion's issue that they have. It comes up that the EFL learners have personal issue in some aspects such as their liking of classroom discussion, their satisfaction, their participation frequency, and their comfort participation.

**Keywords:** Classroom discussion, EFL learners, Qualitative research

### Introduction

Learners of English are demanded to be actively involved in learning process of teaching language (Richards, 2015). It means, teacher's role in the language learning process is only a facilitator and for the rest, the learners of English must explore the knowledge mostly by themselves. That is why nowadays, having a classroom discussion as an active learning is the current trend in teaching language.

Classroom discussion is a discussion where ideas are explored; in which teachers talk less than the learners; in which the learners have the freedom when they want to speak; and in which learners directly share each other (Cazden, 1988). The implementation of classroom discussion to support the language learning process has been working properly in several countries where the people are used to having a class discussion, such as in western countries. However, there are English Foreign Language learners (EFL learners); those who learn English as their foreign language (Azizmohammadi & Hamidizadeh, 2014), whom are parts of countries which are not used to having classroom discussion, such as Indonesia. Thus, what are the problems they face while having classroom discussion? This study focuses on what problems that Indonesian EFL learners face when they are having a classroom discussion.

### Methodology

This research uses qualitative method in collecting the data which we considered it as qualitative research. Qualitative research helps the writer to give more information which can not be got from quantitative research (Ndae, 2013).

The participant of this research are learners of English as foreign language of Tidar

University from the first until seventh semester. In collecting the data, the participants were given questionnaire of seven questions related with classroom discussion in English language learning process. Therefore, some of the participants were also being interviewed by the writers. The other data are also collected from the observation of the writers when the teacher conducts classroom discussion in the language learning process.

### **Findings and Discussion**

There are three aspects that need to be discussed: the observation of the writer, questionnaire results and the interview results. During the language learning process in which classroom discussion happens, the writers have observed that the participation of each member in the discussion is quite imbalance. There are few students who talk dominantly in the discussion, while the rests are only listeners and sometimes they don't even pay attention. In fact, in a classroom discussion, teacher's role is only a facilitator. It means, the learners will be exploring their knowledge; sharing their ideas by themselves in order to improve their knowledge, as well as their skills. Thus, based on the writers' observation above, if there are still learners who are barely giving their participation in classroom discussion, the question will be, 'Why wouldn't they give their participation in classroom discussion?' In order to know the answer that question, the writers gave questionnaire to EFL learners who dominantly give their participation in classroom discussion, as well as those who don't. The questionnaire was chosen from researchers of American Accounting Association which conducted a research related to classroom discussion in Accounting Course (Dallimore, Hertenstein, & Platt, 2010).

#### **Familiarity**

The first aspect is the familiarity of the participants towards classroom discussion. It affects on how the participant would give their answer based on their experience. The participants were given a question, "How familiar are you with classroom discussion?" and 17 of 20 participants responded that they are familiar—even seven of them are very familiar—with classroom discussion, while three of 20 participants answered that they are not. It means almost all of EFL learners are familiar with classroom discussion. Later, the researcher did an interview with two of the participant namely A11 and A12 and the reason why they are not familiar with classroom discussion are (1) because he is not used to using English and, (2) most of the times, the language teaching process are teacher-centered.

#### **Liking of Classroom Discussion**

The second aspect is the liking of classroom discussion of the participants. They were given a question, "How much do you like classroom discussion?" and 15 of 20 participants responded that they like classroom discussion. Two of the rest participants also admitted that they liked classroom discussion very much. Later, the researcher did interviews with the two participants. The learner A2 stated, "*I am bored*", while the learner A10 stated, : "*I prefer to be taught by the teacher to discussing a particular topic related with English, since I hardly understand English*".

#### **Satisfaction**

The third aspect is the participation's satisfaction in classroom discussion. They were given a question, "How are your satisfaction with your participation in a classroom discussion?" and 5 of 20 participants responded that they are not satisfied with their participation in classroom

discussion. Later, the researcher did interviews with three of them. The learner A2 stated, *“My participation in the class is not that important”*, the learner A3 stated, *“Let’s say, I gave my participation in the discussion, but I, myself, not sure with my own opinion in that discussion. It was like, I joined the discussion with no good reason”*, and the learner A10 stated, *“It’s because I hardly understand how the discussion runs, since there will be many opinions related with the topic of discussion”*.

#### Participation Frequency

The fourth aspect is the participation frequency of the participation in classroom discussion. They were given a question, *“How frequently you give your participation in classroom discussion?”* and 6 of 20 participants responded that they do not frequently give their participation in classroom discussion. Later, the researcher did interviews with the three participants. The learner A2 stated, *“I’m shy, I don’t know what to speak”*, the learner A6 stated, *“Actually, I love to give my participation in classroom discussion, but it’s according to the topic that we’ll discuss. That’s why I barely give my participation, because I try to understand how the discussion run”*, and the learner A10 stated, *“I am not really that brave to give my participation in classroom discussion using English Language”*.

#### Comfort Participating

The fifth aspect is the comfort participating of the participants in classroom discussion. They were given a question, *“How comfortable are you to participate in classroom discussion?”* and 5 of 20 participants responded that they are not comfortable to give their participation in classroom discussion. Later, the researcher did interviews with the three participants. The learner A2 stated, *“I’m shy, I don’t know what to speak”*, the learner A6 stated, *“Actually, I love to give my participation in classroom discussion, but it’s according to the topic that we’ll discuss. That’s why I barely give my participation, because I try to understand how the discussion run”*, and the learner A10 stated, *“I am not really that brave to give my participation in classroom discussion using English Language”*.

#### Value of Other Students’ Comments

The sixth aspect is the opinion of the participants about other students’ comments in classroom discussion. They were given a question, *“How valuable are other students’ comments in classroom discussion?”* and 1 of 20 participants responded that other student’s comments are not valuable in classroom discussion. It means almost all of EFL learners agree that other student’s comments are benefit for them.

#### Oral skill Development

The last aspect is the oral skill development of the participants because of classroom discussion. They were given a question, *“How does classroom discussion affect your speaking skill?”* and all the participants responded that classroom discussion affect their oral skill positively. Even though some of EFL learners have problem to have classroom discussion in language learning process, but the discussion actually helps them to improve their oral skill.

### Conclusions

According to the result of the research and the discussion, we can have some conclusions that some learners do not like classroom discussion, because they are bored of it or they prefer teacher-centered, means teacher’s role as the source of knowledge is somehow still important

for them. They also are not satisfied with their participation because they think their participations are not that important and sometimes they do not understand what the discussion is about. Lack of participation they give in classroom discussion is caused by their shyness or their lack of interest towards discussion's topic. Sometimes they are not comfortable in to be involved in classroom discussion since they need more motivation to be brave, otherwise they do not like English.

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