THE BENEFITS OF ONLINE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DURING PANDEMIC: STUDENTS' VIEWPOINT

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ABSTRACT

Online collaborative learning (OCL) provides students' communication by gathering with their group to achieve the course's goals that students have been facing in the Covid-19 pandemic together through online. OCL is the way out to solve the problem when the current circumstances do not allow holding offline group discussions for students. Eventually, there are many benefits that students have been faced by doing OCL during this current situation. Therefore, the researcher wants to investigate the benefits of OCL according to students' points of view. Descriptive qualitative research was designed for this research to answer the research question by digging deeper into participants' answers by using interview for collecting the data. The findings of this research showed three benefits of OCL based on students' points of view. Some students have the flexibility of time and place to hold OCL; students can enhance their technology capability; students can increase their socio-emotional through holding OCL. To sum up, the researcher would inform about the benefits that students and teachers have to be aware more about OCL especially during the Covid-19 pandemic eventually and to support other researchers to arise the same topic.

Keywords: Online collaborative learning, Covid-19 pandemic, the benefits

INTRODUCTION

Corona virus disease 2019 (Covid-19) was massively attacked all of countries. 629.000 cases were confirmed as active cases in Indonesia per December 2020. Many sectors in Indonesia have been getting the impact because of Covid-19 including teaching and learning activities. World Health Organization (WHO) and Indonesia government stated that they switched the normal situation into pandemic situation. All of activities were stopped including education sector. People were not allowed to go out except buying groceries and medicines. Thus, started from work and school was done at home by online. Online learning is the most suitable learning in these current circumstances. Students and teachers have been holding online learning aimed to keep students getting knowledge while they were not allowed to go out during pandemic. Thus, by using online learning, students and teachers were connected even though they are holding teaching and learning in distant. Some activities and application can be the way out for the teachers to hold online learning such as they can use Moodle, online class management, online discussion, articles, blogs, and other platforms in the internet (Rahmatadila, Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsdin, Syaodih, Nurtanto, & Tambunan, 2020).

Because of they were not allowed to gather with their friends, teachers need a strategy to make the classes more interactive. One of strategies that teachers can apply is through collaborative learning. Online group discussion is a beneficial alternative to connect one student to another which became a luxury during the pandemic time. According to Du, Ge, and Xu (2015), collaborative learning purposed students to share their ideas to solve the cases given by their teachers. This way aims to train students to share their opinion by discussing to solve the problem in their group task. Online collaborative learning is not the new phenomenon at English Language Education Department. Some students already used online collaborative learning when the situation was still normal. Yet, because of this pandemic condition, they are forced totally to use online collaborative learning.

Thus, in this study, the researcher wants to raise the benefits of online collaborative learning during pandemic. Hence, students can be more aware with online collaborative learning during pandemic. They also can learn many platform suggestion based on the studies' findings. Students also can learn how to communicate with their group members while they were working virtually in this condition. Muuro, Wagacha, Oboko, and Kihoro (2014) said that students apply online collaborative learning to match their goals, levels, and result. So, their group tasks are finished as well as possible. Moreover, by using online collaborative learning, it eases students to achieve their group goals even though in distant because they have flexibilities either time or places (Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg,

2018). So, many benefits that online collaborative learning has served during pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Collaborative learning is the way the lecturer keeps student's communication skill. The purpose of using collaborative learning is to train students to speak up about their opinion. Zhu (2012) supported that collaborative learning is a social activity that involves a group of students. They usually exchange information and improve the way they discuss about the materials. Collaborative learning usually involves 2 or more students to hold discussion (Dewiyanti, Brand-Gruwel, Jochems, & Broers, 2004). It helps students to consider the best conclusion among the discussions to answer the group problems. Collaborative learning also can improve the way they respond other members' responds as well as possible (Kwon, Liu, & Johnson, 2014). Thus, students can improve their sensitivity to their group members if there any problems or during holding discussion.

Due the pandemic, collaborative learning cannot be held by face-to-face meeting. Online learning is the way out to solve if students cannot meet their group members directly. According to Smallwood and Brunner (2017), online learning replaces offline meeting models. Students can finish their works wherever and whenever they are. So, they have flexibility of time and place.

Furthermore, considering this situation, online collaborative learning is the way out for students who cannot hold offline discussion. It is aimed to prevent the spread of virus among students or teachers. So, technology plays important role for collaborative learning. Zhu (2012) supported that online collaborative learning improve students to create interactive digital product in pairs. Singh and Thurman (2019) also added that many platforms that serves discussion forum feature, so, it allows students to exchange their ideas while they are working together in distant. Most of students often use these applications to hold discussion such as video conference applications and E-learning management (Mustakim, Trisnaningsih, & Adha, 2021).

Considering that online collaborative learning have to be applied by students to finish their group task, there are many benefits of online collaborative learning during pandemic. They can use their time properly. Besides, students can learn how to manage their time well between other tasks. As reported by Tseng (2009), online collaborative learning can remove time limitation. So, they can hold online collaborative learning if they have spare time. Also, because of students holding collaborative learning virtually by using online, students also have a chance to search many sources. Kessler and Dawn (2010) agreed that by holding collaborative learning virtually can enhance student's critical thinking because students can elaborate more about the material that they have searched. They can be more selective to accept the information that can be fulfilled their material needs.

Considering first purpose of collaborative learning, online collaborative learning during pandemic aims to improve student's communication skill. By doing online collaborative learning, students can interact and giving feedback each other (Tseng, Wang, Ku, & Sun, 2009). Online collaborative learning serves positive attitude because online collaborative learning serves students to solve the material in peers. This is better than work individually (Sullivan as cited in Tseng et al., 2009). Furthermore, Cheng, Wang, Huang, and Zarifis (2016) added that students should have trust to other members, sensitivity to help if there any difficult part of group task, and good response to other members

METHODOLOGY

This research concerned to students' experiences towards online collaborative learning especially, the researcher wanted to know the benefits of online collaborative learning during pandemic according to students' perceptions. Thus, this research used a qualitative approach especially descriptive qualitative design. Qualitative research is used to find out human or social problems in individually or groups (Cresswell, 2018). The researcher wanted to know students' experience toward online collaborative learning during pandemic in detail. Thus, descriptive qualitative design is more suitable to find out the detail information. The aim of descriptive qualitative design is to dig deeper human's experience towards something in daily terms (Lambert, 2012). Hence, the participants could tell their experience without any limitation.

This research was conducted at English Language Education Department in one of private university in Yogyakarta. The participants were students who used online collaborative learning during pandemic. Here, students often used online collaborative learning from the first meeting until the last meeting and also the participants already participated in a group where the other members lived far away from them. There were six students in batch 2018 who met the criteria. The pseudonym participants' names were Phillip, Jasmine, Elsa, Cinderella, Mulan, and Belle. They were in the same class Digital Technology Education Course with the same lecturer. Also, they were students batch 2018 English Language Education

Department. She was a student who arranged the division of the group tasks. She usually created the power point after her group collecting the tasks. Then, the third participant was Elsa, she was an English Education Department student batch 2018. She took Digital Technology Education course while she was in fifth semester. From the researcher's observation, she was a student who played passive in her group. She used to follow the flow from her group and rarely did group discussion. The fourth participant was Cinderella. She also was English Language Education Department student batch 2018. She took Digital English Education course when she was in fifth semester. She was active group member by arranging the group task. The fifth participant was Mulan. She was English Language Education Department student batch 2018. She took Digital Technology when she was in fifth semester. The lecturer of this course pointed her because she had bad group in this course at that time and she was active student in this course. Not only that, but the lecturer also confirmed that she was one of the creative students in this course. The last participant was Belle. She also was pointed by the lecturer because she had a good group control. She was Digital Technology Education Department student batch 2018. She also took this course when she was in fifth semester.

The researcher used interview as the research technique to collect the data and used interview guideline as the instruments to collect the data. The interview was conducted by using Indonesian to prevent misunderstanding between participant and the researcher. The interview had held by offline meeting and online meeting through Microsoft Teams.

After the data were collected, the researcher transcribed the data into written script. It eased the researcher to find out the same label and collect the data into the same theme. After the data were transcribed, the researcher did member checking to the participants. Thus, the participants could add or delete their statements. In this step, several participants added their statements to make it clear and corrected the name of application. After the transcripts were confirmed by the participants, the researcher did coding to label the same data. After that, the researcher interpreted the result, then, reported into written report and presentation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After analyze the data, the researcher found three benefits of online collaborative learning. There are students can get time and place flexibility, enhancing socio-emotional learning, and enhancing technology knowledge.

Offering Time and Place Flexibility

Participants confessed that by using online collaborative learning in this situation, they could learn in pairs in distant. They often do remote group control to discuss clearly about the material. Moreover, by using online, most of students had other activities and tasks. Thus, by using online collaborative learning students can improve their time management to be better. Doolan, Thomton, and Hilliard (2006) stated that online collaborative learning should be reduced the strict time constraint. However, because of pandemic and students were not allowed to go out and gathered with their pairs, students often spared their time in their houses. So, they confessed that the house vibe teased them to be lazy. Therefore, by using online collaborative learning during pandemic, students tended to improve how they manage their time well. Phillip confessed that online learning pulled him to be lazier, so, he learned arranging my time to finish my tasks with his friends. They needed rest but they had to finish their group task. Macdonald (2003) supported that online collaborative learning can be more flexible to do the group task. They can deal with their members when they have to hold discussion. It is also supported by Bokhari (2019), online collaborative learning also offers students a space to discuss the materials with their friends or group, meanwhile it can support time flexibility for them for holding online collaborative learning.

Furthermore, students also got place flexibility. Regarding online learning and gathering prohibition, most of students returned to their hometown. To keep students' interaction skill, teachers used online collaborative learning as the way to help them to interact and still improve their communication. Participants agreed that by using online collaborative learning, students could hold the discussion in distant. Thus, it can be concluded that by using online collaborative learning, students can conduct online collaborative learning during pandemic even though they were in distant.

Phillip stated that they could attend virtual group meeting while he was shopping at the market. Sometime, Phillip was in the car. He just needed phone that was connected by signal. Also, Jasmine added that she could hold the meeting wherever she was. She could move from one room to another room. According to Redmond and Lock (2006), the use of technology is to facilitate students to learn with their pairs wherever and whenever they were. Moreover, this experience already happened in university in Taiwan that the lecturer liberated their students to go out to do their group activities wherever they wanted (Zhang, Peng, & Hung, 2009).

Enhancing Student's Technology Capability

Everything that involves online cannot be separated with technology development. In this current situation, technology plays important role for students to interact with other students. There are many applications in the internet that can be used for online collaborative learning. These participants confessed that they often used Whatssapp Group to monitor the group progress. Phillip agreed that he was asked by the lecturer to create Whatssapp Group to monitor his group and communicate with his members. Cinderella also used Whatssap Group to discuss the material or the tasks. They also used Zoom or Microsoft Teams if they wanted to hold video conference, and Google Docs to collect their part of group task.

Besides of that, online collaborative learning during pandemic taught them to learn the newest application for them, namely, Google Classroom. They used Google Classroom to arrange lesson plan as the group task. Mulan stated that she learned Google Classroom for the first time. She added that it can be her reference to hold teaching activities later.

According to Nagar and Shonfeld (2017), by using technology, students can communicate and remote their assignment even though they were far away each other. Also, by using technology can create something digital such as poster, animation, songs, or other digital products. Laurillard (2008) supported that technology attracted students to create digital products together. Moreover, Berldarrain (2007) reported that technology can develop students' knowledge through searching many sources then they can share the knowledge collaboratively through teamwork by using technology. Thus, they did not need to meet each other to discuss the material and also they did not need to arrange their product. They could use imagination to create digital product.

Increasing Student's Socio-Emotional Learning

In this finding, the researcher found that by using online collaborative learning can also train students to have positive attitude the way they respond and manage their emotion towards their group members. Socio-emotional learning is how students learn to have sensitivity to help other members who felt difficult with their part of task, emotion management, and trust. It also trained students to be more responsible for each other. Phillip stated that by using online collaborative learning, he had responsibility to control his group well, so, his group could have good performance by having good teamwork. He also added that he should invite his group members to solve the group task problems together. Thus, he confessed that he made

his group to be good teamwork. However, Elsa argued that she had to be more patience to face her members because her members exactly had group problems or obstacles. Besides, Belle also supported what Elsa said that she needed to be more patience. If there any member could not attend to the group discussion, she added the discussion result, thus, member who could not join can re-read the result. Mulan also added that it made sense if she rushed her group members because every each members got their own part of task. So, she had to remind to other members that they had to responsible with their part.

Socio-emotional learning is the important thing that should be implanted in every student. It affects the way they respond to other people when they are working together. Helaluddin and Alamsyah (2019) reported that socio-emotional learning serves as the human's ability that can control their emotion and determine the way they respond to act their circumstances. Socio-emotional learning can be formed as trust, group coordination, and group monitoring to build better teamwork. Kwon et al. (2014) stated that the purpose of online collaborative learning is to promote socio-emotional learning with group members. It is needed to enhance their positive communication skill in collaborative learning especially by using online. Kwon et al. (2014) also added that taking responsibility is important to make the group succeed and ease the group progresses.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research discusses about students' perceptions towards online collaborative learning in English Language Education Department during pandemic. This research is also focused on the benefits of online collaborative learning that had been faced by students during the beginning of pandemic. Hence, this research purposes to investigate the benefits of online collaborative learning during pandemic.

The design of this research was descriptive qualitative where the researcher conducted this research by using semi structured interview. The researcher also conducted this research at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta by choosing six participants in batch 2018. The participants were chosen because they had used online collaborative learning during pandemic since in the beginning of pandemic until the last semester.

The researcher found 3 findings to discuss about the benefits of online collaborative learning. There are students can get time and place flexibilities, students also can develop their technology knowledge, and students can learn their socio-emotional. Additional, the researcher found several tools that students often used for holding online

collaborative learning. There are Google Docs, Google Classroom, and Whatssapp.

Based on the findings, the researcher attaches implications for several parties in regard to hold online collaborative learning in English Language Education during pandemic such as students, teachers, and future researchers. This research addressed to students so that they can be more aware with the benefits of online collaborative learning. Moreover, students can improve the way they conduct online collaborative learning during pandemic. Secondly, teachers have to control the students well during online collaborative learning during pandemic. Teacher is the facilitator for the students because students will get a lot of sources by using online learning, so, it prevents students to be confused about the material for online group discussion. By seeing students' experiences, the future researcher can dig deeply give other examples that students already faced. This research suggests holding this research from teachers' point of views. Hence, people can consider with the both side.

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