

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study aims to discuss the benefits and challenges of group discussion in Syntax project in one of Institutes in Kendari. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study, and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

A long line of research underscores the benefits of discussion in learning process, especially group discussion, for achieving desired learning outcomes and student satisfaction Michael Prince, (2004). In the overall, desiderate of classroom instruction, student interaction, problem solving, cooperation, mastery of content are the positive effects of group discussion Phillips, (2005), Nicol & Boyle, (2003) and Ellis et al., (2004).

Discussion promotes communication skills Dallimore et al., (2008), but they also improve learning Davis & Hillman Murrell, (1993), including cooperative learning and critical thinking Garside, (1996). For example, in her comparison of student learning of material taught in lecture and presented in discussion, (Garside, 1996) reports “significantly more learning with regard to higher level items” is in the discussion mode. Similarly, (Lyon & Lagowski, 2008) show that students participating in discussion groups scored higher on

exams and attained higher course grades than those not attending discussion sessions. Group discussion facilitates students to exchange their knowledge and experience together. Group discussion can be done through an online class and offline class. However, group discussion in online discussion has limited interaction which makes students hardly develop interaction skills with other students. This evidence is in line with (Baskoro, 2018) who argues that online discussion makes students barely experience the ambience of the classroom discussion during learning.

In the group discussion, there are many types of individual differences of students. In line with it, with individual differences there will be many ideas so group discussion can generate more knowledge for students'. Learning in a discussion requires the students to discuss a topic Cheruvellil, Soranno, Weathers, Hanson, Simon, Filstrup, & Read, (2014). It makes them connect with other students in learning together as a team. They mention interpersonal skill as a skill where students connect with other students using emotional engagement as human beings.

Some scholars had previously analyzed this about the benefits of group discussion. A study by Riski and Sucitra (2017) reported that group discussions improve their attitude in communication skill, self-confidence and respect. In addition, Hunkins & Hammill, (1994) mentions that group discussions make the students more tolerant in learning diversity. For instance, students in Islamic institute at Kendari came from various places. The students should deal with diversity in order to interact with other students who come from different backgrounds and build the relationship among students by developing

interpersonal skills in their learning. If the students are aware of the benefits of group discussions, they might develop their interpersonal skills, thus would be more willing to participate in group discussions.

However, based on the researcher preliminary observation, Syntax class is one of the subjects in the institute which mostly used discussion in learning process. There were students who barely participate in a group discussion and there were students who had more confidence to express their opinion more often and dominate the discussion, while some of them who were less confident stayed silent during the discussion. The reason was that they do not know the importance of active participation in a group discussion. They do not get actively involved in it and it makes it difficult for the students to cooperate and get the benefits of group discussion for their interpersonal skill. Based on the explanation, the researcher wants to explore the benefits of group discussion in syntax project because the researcher wanted to see if group discussion might increase the students' confidence, communication skill, and knowledge of the class project.

In addition to discussions conducted in the entire class discussions, discussions in classes can also lead to enhance instruction. Discussions are a widely used instructional tool in courses conducted partially or entirely online because in asynchronous online instruction, discussion groups may be the only way to conceptualize the immediacy and dynamism of the face-to-face environment. Discussion offers the promise of a “democratized” environment, in which previously reticent students feel more comfortable participating (Pollock et al., 2005). In addition to the format of the discussion, student characteristics are also important in producing beneficial outcomes.

In this course, students receive comprehensive theoretical background information about syntax project and then they start implementing it in microteaching sessions in teaching English subjects. During the application of syntax, they displayed great abilities and confidence, but they still uncertain whether or not will be able to apply it in real classroom situation during their teaching practice, and what challenges they might encounter? it has been noticed that just few of them who used syntax project in classrooms. This was the key motive for me to investigate the problem in order to find out the challenges that hinder the application of Syntax project. Therefore, this study aims to the benefits of group discussion and challenges of Syntax project if there are any. It also aims to provide some suggestions based on the findings of the study that might facilitate the implementation of group discussion and Syntax project.

Syntax project should lead students in search of open problem solving, as well as the acquisition of skills, such as problem-solving ability, oral communication, written communication and teamwork, among others. In such learning environment, the students are able to create their own knowledge, at their own pace. They also develop self-directed learning skills and critical thinking. While developing their projects, the students are also exposed to many aspects of a given process. This brings them closer to real life expectations. Studies show that the acquired and developed skills are aligned with those possessed by more experienced engineers Frank et al., (2003). The findings suggest that professional development may help alleviate some of the perceived challenges teachers face when implementing project-based learning. The study also suggests that 21st Century skills play a valuable role in project-based learning implementations and

should be specifically addressed in the development and implementation of project-based learning experiences.

According to the Ministry of Education, students should be prepared to enter a knowledge based economy by helping them to acquire the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. To fulfill this goal, Singapore has been chosen as a model for the reformation of the educational system in the public schools. Syntax project based learning was also adopted as a method of instruction “because it is more similar to the globalized working environment than traditional lecture driven instruction” Wilkinson, (2014).

### **1.2 Scope of the Study**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher involves 25 students in one of Islamic state in Kendari. They were at five semester at the university and after studied Syntax class while being the subject of this study. This study focuses to know the benefits and challenging of group discussion in Syntax Project since the researcher scrutinizes to see the challenging of group discussion and might group discussion increase the students’ confidence and communication skill.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study attempted to answer, “What are the benefits of group discussion and challenges of Syntax project faced by the students in Syntax class?”

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the research question, this present study aims to know what the group discussion's benefits in Syntax project and to know the challenges of Syntax project in Syntax class.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study offers important theoretical and practical insights. The finding of this study can be used as references for those who want to conduct research in investigate the benefits of group discussion and the challenges of Syntax project. As a result teacher can help their students to improve students' interest in learning based on students' preferences of the group discussion. Hence, it can give positive impacts for academic society such as for institution to improve the quality discussion. In another hand, the positive impact in practice, this study helps a teacher to integrate their teaching strategies in teaching and to increase students' motivation to learn English. Therefore, this research will be helpful for a teacher to know students' preference about group discussion.

Although the sample of the study is relatively small, the researcher expects that this study will provide useful information about the possibility of the benefits of group discussion and challenges of syntax project. It is also hoped that instructors of method courses can use such information in preparing materials and tasks in advance to minimize the influence of those benefits and challenges. In addition, this information could be valuable for decision makers to direct their attention to the importance of carrying out an environmental analysis before adopting new teaching methods or curriculum.

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study can be used as a useful reference to reveal how to know the benefits of group discussion and challenges in Syntax project. In short, it will be a reference for another researcher who wants to conduct the study related to the benefits of group discussion in Syntax project.

### **1.5.2 Practical Significance**

The significance of this study is to help teacher to expose the benefits and challenges of group discussion in Syntax project. Moreover, this study expected not only the researcher, but it expected to help students in developing their skills with using group discussion in Syntax project. Therefore, it can give positive impacts for institution to develop and improve the students' skill in the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indirectly, it can be the method or strategy in creating prospective Syntax teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

This part aims to defined some important terms in this study as in the following:

Group discussion in this study means a simple group that consists of 6-7 participant of student that focused to one mini project that is Syntax project. Group discussion is one of the best tools to select the prospective candidates in comparative perspective. The main characteristic of a group discussion is the interaction between the moderator and the group, as well as the interaction between group members. The objective is to give the researcher an understanding of the participants' perspective on the topic in discussion about sign board project.

Syntax project are one of mini project for students in the fifth semester in English Education Department in Kendari. Syntax project are final test for finished the syntax class. This project involves to finding of sign boards in public area and then trying to analyze the errors of grammar, spelling, and translation error of the sign boards after that students make it in the form of report and present it in the class.

