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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE FACILITATION STRATEGIES PROVIDED BY TEACHERS IN ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE DISCUSSION

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Abstract

Facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion environment becomes essential aspects in learning. This present study was a case study aimed at exploring EFL students' perception on facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion in terms of monitoring, feedback and scoring rubric implemented in the online discussion. Questionnaire was administered to one hundred students and interview was conducted to six voluntary students who were enrolled in courses with asynchronous online discussion. The result indicated that students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion was neutral which indicated that facilitation provided by teachers did not become the main preference for the students in asynchronous online discussion. Students perceived teachers' monitoring positively since the students need more guidances to understand the concept as well as to indicate that their participation is apprecited by the teachers. Meanwhile, students had neutral perception toward feedback and scoring rubric provided in asynchronous online discussion. They perceived that feedback and scoring rubric are not essential elements that influence their participation in asynchronous online discussion. Furthermore, it implied that the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion has to enable teacher to check students progress and to motivate students to engage in asynchronous online discussion.

Keywords: asynchronous online discussion, facilitation strategies, perception

Introduction

Many instructional strategies has been explored by many instructors in order to maximize the students' experience in online learning environment (Oh et al., 2018). Many strategies in face to face learning has been adapted and implemented in online learning setting. Asynchronous online discussion is one of the learning strategy that are commonly utilized by teachers to facilitate students learning through online interaction which serve flexility of time and place (Bailey et al., 2021; Dewi et al., 2018). Asynchronous online discussion promotes dialogue,

reflection, and knowledge construction which are very essential skills to develop in 21st century learning paradigm (Calderon & Sood, 2020; Ergulec, 2019; Koehler et al., 2020; Oh et al., 2018). Due to the physical separation, asynchronous online discussion is considered to be able to facilitate social interaction among students and knowledge construction through peer interaction (Oh et al., 2018).

Recently, the implementation of asynchronous online discussion is not limited as the extention or sumplementary activities of face to face instruction, but it becomes the main instructional strategy due to the online learning that is conducted by almost all schools and universities in Indonesia (Alim et al., 2019; Ergulec, 2019; Koehler et al., 2020). Teachers and instuctors conducts asynchronous online discussion to facilitate students learning through the use of various learning platforms (Al-Husban, 2020; Cakrawati, 2017). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture has suggested Learning Management System to be used by schools as the learning platforms. Google Classroom is taken as the suggested learning platform used by schools in Indonesia. Nevertheles, many schools also using different Learning Management System to support the implementation online discussion such as Moodle, Schoology, Class Dojo, Edmodo, etc (Alim et al., 2019; Awofeso et al., 2016; Dillon et al., 2019; Irawan et al., 2017). On the other hand, some schools still using social media platform such as Whatsapp to conduct the asynchronous online discussion (Juhari & Muthahharah, 2020). The learning pratform chosen also contributes to the effectiveness of the implementation of asynchronous online discussion and how the learning process will be carried out.

Many aspects need to be considered to conduct asynchronous online discussion in order to achieve effective and engaging online discussion environment (Wang, 2015). It includes the design of the asynchronous online discussion as well as the facilitation strategies carried out during the implementation of asynchronous online discussion (Ergulec, 2019). In conducting asynchronous online discussion, teachers' role is very essential to moderate the discussion and provide sufficient guidance for the students in their process of knowledge construction (Pollak, 2017; Wang, 2015). During the asynchronous online discussion, students often encounter problems to understand the concept (McDowell, 2020). Teachers need to be sensitive and give confirmation quickly to avoid misconception among students (Nguyen et al., 2020; Veranika, 2017). Besides, teachers quick response to the issues encontered by the students contribute to the motivation of the students to participate (Nguyen et al., 2020). Therefore, maintaining teachers online presence in asynchrous online discussion by monitoring and giving feedback to students which become aspect of facilitation strategies in asynchrous online discussion (Hew, 2015).

Facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion becomes one of the aspects that influence students participation (Bailey et al., 2021; Hew, 2015). It is due to the absence of physical presence of the teachers (Veranika, 2017). Therefore, the establishement of facilitation strategies have to consider how the facilitation strategies aspect can motivate students to participate in online discussion (Calderon & Sood, 2020; Hew, 2015). The facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion is to enable students to see their progress and to do reflection on it (Oh et al., 2018). Moreover, the facilitation

strategies provided will determine how the asynchronous online discussion will be conducted. The role of teachers as moderator and facilitator needs to be emphasized in order to facilitate students' learning through monitoring, guidance, and providing feedback for students (Calderon & Sood, 2020).

With regards to the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion, this present study investigated students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion. It includes the students' perception on three dimensions of facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion namely monitoring, feedback, and scoring rubric.

Method

This present study is a case study research which focused on EFL students' perception on the facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion. It was aimed at investigating students' perception on the facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion in term of monitoring, feedback, and scoring rubric dimensions. The participants taken in this study were third and fifth semester students who were enrolled in courses that implemented asynchronous online discussion. This study utilized questionnaires administration and interview in collecting data about students' perception on the facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion. The questionnaires were administered to one hundred EFL students. Meanwhile, the interview was done to six students in order to provide complete insight about students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion.

Data analysis was done quantitatively and qualitatively toward the data of students, perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion. Quantitative data analysis was done to the data from questionnaire in which it was processed using SPSS version 24 to count the mean score of the data on students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion. The percentages of scale value of each dimensions of facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion namely monitoring, feedback and scoring rubric were also counted. The students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion was determined by categorizing the mean scores based on the qualification level guideline by Koyan (2012 pp. 24-25) which consists five levels of qualification of students' perception. The lowest categorization corresponds to very negative perception and very high categorization corresponds to very positive perception. Qualitative data analysis was done to the data collected from interview. The data were analyzed systematically using qualitative research procedure suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which includes four stages namely data collection, data consedation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Then, the result of analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data were combined to draw final conclusion about students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion.

Findings and Discussion

The facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion covered three dimensions that were investigated. Those dimensions included teacher's monitoring, teacher's feedback and scoring rubric dimensions. The result of

students' perception on the facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion was obtained through calculation and analysis all those three dimensions.

Students' Perception on Teacher's Monitoring

Teacher's monitoring becomes the first dimension that was investigated. Students' perception on the teacher's monitoring in asynchronous online discussion was positive based on the data of the questionnaire. The mean score of students' perception on teacher's monitoring which was 5.48 which belongs to the second interval ($5.5 \leq M < 6.5$) of qualification level. It was categorized as high is categorized which means that students' perception on teacher's monitoring was positive. Students agree on the teacher's monitoring in asynchronous online discussion. Figure 1 showed the percentage of students' response on teacher's monitoring in asynchronous online discussion.

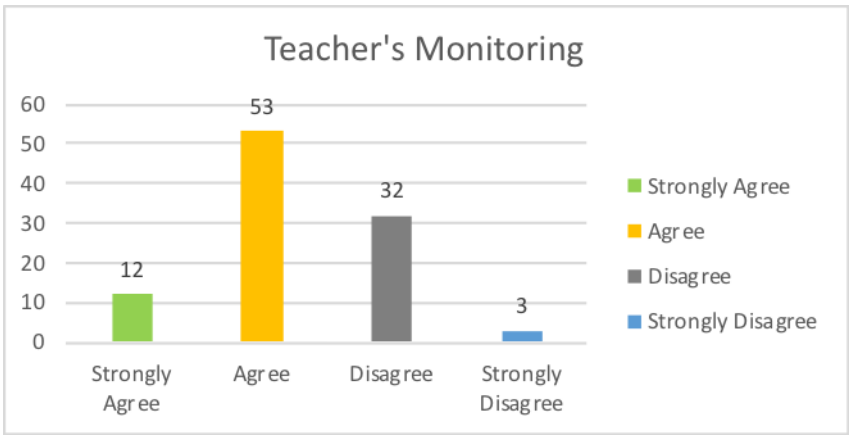


Figure 1. The percentage of students' response on teacher's monitoring

Figure 1 shows that 12% students strongly agreed on teacher's monitoring provided in asynchronous online discussion. 53% students agreed on teacher's monitoring in asynchronous online discussion. There were 32% students disagreed on teacher's monitoring. 3% students strongly disagreed teacher's monitoring provided in asynchronous online discussion. Higher percentage of students' response who agreed to teacher's monitoring indicated that the students' perceived the teacher's monitoring as an important aspect for their learning in asynchronous online learning environment. This finding was supported with the result of the interview from Respondent 1 and Respondent 6.

Respondent 1: I like it. It is to make sure who is diligent, who doesn't read the material. So, it is not useless for the lecturer giving the materials.

Respondent 6: I like treated that way. It means that we are appreciated. Our opinion is appreciated by the lecturer. In addition, the students who have low participation will be more motivated when seeing students who have high participation and they are appreciated.

The result of interview showed that the students perceived teacher's monitoring in asynchronous online discussion was to motivate and appreciate

students' effort. It was able to motivate students to learn and participate actively in which students who have low participation are motivated when the teacher frequently monitor the progress in the discussion. The students perceived that the frequency of teacher's monitoring the discussion is important in order to make sure that the students access the learning materials and participate. When teacher monitor the students' progress in asynchronous online discussion, the students thought that they are appreciated which contributed to the participation.

Students' Perception on Teacher's Feedback

Teacher's feedback is the second dimension of facilitation strategies provided by the teachers in asynchronous online discussion setting. Students perceived teacher's feedback neutral. The mean score of students' perception on teacher's feedback was 5.4. It belonged to the third interval ($4.5 \leq M < 5.5$) in qualification level. The mean score of students' perception was categorized as average which means that the students' perception on teacher's feedback was neutral. Figure 2 is the percentage of students' response on teacher's feedback.

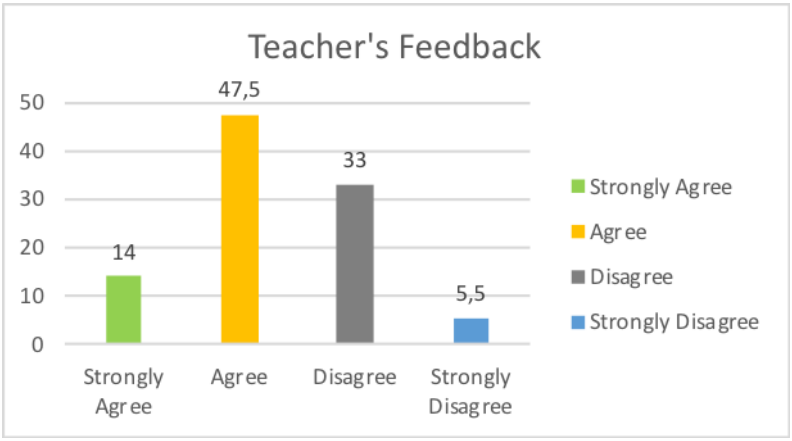


Figure 2. The percentage of students' response on teacher's feedback

Based on figure 2, there were 14% students who strongly agreed on the presence of teacher's feedback on asynchronous online discussion. 47.5% students agreed on the presence of teacher's feedback in asynchronous online discussion. There were 33% students who disagreed on teacher's feedback provided in asynchronous online discussion. Meanwhile 5.5% students strongly disagreed on the presence of teacher's feedback. It can be seen that the difference of percentage between students who agreed and did not was not really significant. The finding of the interview also showed that there was dichotomy on the respondents' statements. Respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 stated that they like when teachers give positive or negative feedback during the discussion. Meanwhile, respondent 6 mentioned that he likes feedbacks from teachers but he specifically stated that positive or negative feedback did not have special impression to him.

Respondent 1: I like feedback especially the positive one to motivate myself.
Respondent 2: I love feedback. When we made mistakes and we are given clarification, we know that we made mistakes.

Respondent 3: I prefer negative feedback. It is to motivate myself to study well.
Respondent 4: I like feedback. When we are given feedback, we will be eager to join the online discussion.
Respondent 5: That's fine to give me negative feedback when I made mistakes, as long as it is constructive feedback. It depends on personality of each individual. There are students who feel demotivated when get criticism. In my case, I am still motivated.
Respondent 6: Of course, I like it. Positive or negative feedback is not a big deal for me. If it is wrong, revise it. If it is already right, that's it.

The result of the interview supported the result of the questionnaire which indicated students' perception was neutral. Feedback given by teachers was not viewed as the aspect of facilitation that can significantly influence students' participation in asynchronous online discussion. It was rather taken as reflection of their learning and to motivate them to perform better. Some students stated that teacher's feedback is able to give confirmation on particular issues encountered by the students during the discussion session. Three respondents preferred positive feedback. Two respondents liked negative feedback and one respondent gave neutral statement. The students prefered positive feedback given by the teacher because they perceived their understanding is correct. Some students perceived negative feedback better bacause they can learn more from their mistakes. However, the students did not perceived teacher's feedback as the main aspect of facilitation in asynchronous online discussion that can improve their motivation and participation.

Students' Perception on Scoring Rubric Provided in Asynchronous Online Discussion

The third dimension in facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion is scoring rubric. The data from questionnaire showed that students perceived scoring rubric provided in asynchronous online discussion neutral. It was gotten from the mean score of students' perception on scoring rubric which was 5.16. This mean score were categorized average which belonged to the third interval ($4.5 \leq M < 5.5$) in qualification level. The percentage of students' response about scoring rubric provided in asynchronous online discussion was shown in figure 3.

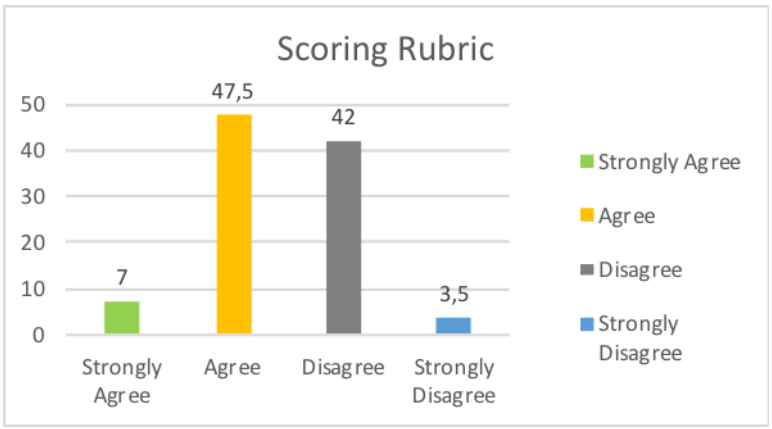


Figure 3. The percentage of students' response on scoring rubric

Figure 3 showed that there was a slight differences in percentage of students response between agree and disagree scale. There were 47.5% of the students' response was agree. Meanwhile, 42% students was 42 percent response was disagree. The small difference between students response indicated that students had neutral perception on scoring rubric. The result of the interview supported the result of the data from the questionnaire related to the scoring rubric provided in asynchronous online discussion. The interview result showed that three respondents perceived that scoring rubric is essensial to be given in asynchronous online discussion environment. Three other respondents perceived that scoring rubric is not necessarily given to the students. Respondent 1, Respondent 5, and Respondent 6 perceived scoring rubric in asynchronous online discussion is important to be given.

Respondent 1: I choose being given the scoring rubric. It is to motivate us, so we can measure our competence.
Respondent 5: I choose being given a scoring rubric because we need to know how aech argument and participation are measured in the discussion.
Respondent 6: I like being given scoring rubric. So, there is clarification for all we do in discussion.

Meanwhile, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, and Respondent 4 mentioned that providing scoring rubric in asynchronous online discussion is not essesntial.

Respondent 2: It does not affect me whether the scoring rubric is given or not. Probably, when we are not given the scoring rubric, it make us focus on the learning rather than the scoring system.
Respondent 3: No, I don't want it. I want to be more creative in giving my argument and participating in the discussion.. Let it become the lecturer's business. We don't need to know.
Respondent 4: No, I don't need scoring rubric. I want to feel free when I am going to give comment. It is free whether we want to comment a lot or not.

Some students perceived that scoring rubric is important in order to provide guidance and motivation as well as to perform measure students' learning performance in asynchronous online discussion. However, some students perceived that scoring rubric does not affect their learning experience. They perceived that scoring rubric is not needed because the students want to express their argument freely and creatively. They expected that in asynchronous online dicussion they did not think about the indicators in the scoring rubric. Moreover, the students perceived that scoring rubric did not influence their participation in asynchronous online discussion.

The findings showed that students' perception on facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion was neutral. It was indicated by the result of the calculation of mean scores on three dimensions of facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion which was categorized in average level. In asynchronous online discussion environment, students' preferred peer facilitation rather than faciliation strategies provided by the teachers (Ghadirian et al., 2018; Hew, 2015; Oh et al., 2018). It is motivated by several

reasons in which the students need to have more freedom in giving their arguments as well as they want to have more responsibility in determining the direction of the discussion.

The dimensions of facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion were perceived differently by the students. The teacher's monitoring provided in asynchronous online discussion was perceived positive by the students due to its importance to increase students' motivation to participate in online discussion. Teacher's presence plays important role in online discussion setting (Ergulec, 2019; Oh et al., 2018). Asynchronous online discussion is more effective when the teacher provide monitoring frequenlty on the discussion board. Ergulec (2019) suggested several strategies that have to be done by the teacher in monitoring the asynchronous online discussion. It includes regular checking the discussion board, providing summary the discussion, and posting Teacher has to check the discussion regularly to show that the teacher read the students' postings. Providing summary about what that has been done by the students is able to motivate students to participate more. Besides, teacher can encourage the students to do more dialogue by posting thought-provoking questions. Positive perception on teacher's monitoring can be motivated by students' perception on the competence of the teachers who are believed more capable that their peers (Hew, 2015).

Teacher's feedback provided in asynchronous online discussion was perceived neutral by the students. Some students perceived teacher's feedback as the aspect of facilitation which provided confirmation and reflection of students' learning performance in asynchronous online discussion. In conducting asynchronous online discussion, teachers are required to provide enough feedback for the students in order to improve students' participation (Ergulec, 2019). Providing feedback in online discussion is able to guide students' learning experience and development (Sherman, 2019). Giving immediate feedback in asynchronous online discussion is essential in order to enhance students' motivation which directly contribute to the students' participation (Hew, 2015). Beside teacher's feedback, peer feedback is also preferred by the students since student-student interaction is the main interaction promoted in asynchronous online discussion (Ergulec, 2019).

Providing scoring rubric in asynchronous online discussion was perceived neutral by the students. It is motivated by dicothomies of students' perception on scoring rubric provided for asynchronous online discussion. Some students perceived that scoring rubric provides guidance to enhance learning outcomes and motivation. However, some students perceived that the presence of scoring rubric did not affect students' participation because they want to be more free in sharing their point of view (Calderon & Sood, 2020; Hew, 2015). Scoring rubric needs to be generated in order to measure students' performance in asynchronous online discussion (Calderon & Sood, 2020). Clearly defined scoring rubric is needed to encourage students to engage in more meaninful and controlled online discussion in which the discussion will be on track without teacher's frequent control (Baldwin et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Students' perception on facilitation strategies provided in asynchronous online discussion was perceived neutral. It deals with how the facilitation strategies provided can affect students' learning experience. Students perceived facilitation strategies provided by the teacher in asynchronous online discussion neutral due to the preference of the students which perceived peer facilitation is more effective (Hew, 2015; Oh et al., 2018)

The role of teacher's monitoring is important to enhance students' participation. The students perceived teacher's monitoring positively because the students feel that their efforts are appreciated by the teacher. It contributes to students' motivation to participate more in the discussion. The frequency of the teacher's monitoring and the monitoring strategies conducted will affect the effectiveness of the online discussion which enhances learning experiences.

Besides, the presence of teacher's feedback as another dimensions of facilitation strategies in asynchronous online discussion was perceived neutral by the students. Teacher's feedback is considered to be able to provide confirmation and reflection on students' understanding. However, it did not motivate students to improve their participation. It can be motivated by the preferences of the students who perceived peer feedback is more meaningful for their learning than feedback given by the teacher (Hew, 2015).

Scoring rubric provided in asynchronous online discussion was also perceived neutral by the students. The use of scoring rubric in asynchronous is considered giving guidance during the online discussion. However, scoring rubric is perceived to limit students in expressing their idea (Hew, 2015). Therefore, scoring rubric was perceived neutral by the students.

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