CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Research

Since the development of communication technology, the learning process in Indonesia has been introduced to an online learning system, where all teaching and learning activities are carried out using the internet and existing technology. One of the uses of technology and the internet for the teaching and learning process is use online discussion forums.

The Online Discussion Forums (ODFs) is a feature in an online learning platform that can be used to improve written communication skills. Beside to complete online courses, their use in conventional learning environments as a supplement to face-to-face training is increasing and has now become a common educational strategy in higher education (Zhang and Franklin, 2013). Online discussion forums are centered on student learning and allow students to control and coordinate a discussion. Tella (2011) stated that increasing student participation in online discussion forums can improve their learning outcomes and achievements. Because of their potential benefits, online discussion forums are becoming a common feature even in face-to-face courses as they allow students and instructors to communicate with each other regardless of space and time.

The advantages of using online discussion groups and peer-to-peer learning to enhance student learning are well established. One of the advantages of online discussions is to encourage students to improve their writing skills and develop their

critical thinking. In this case, students could practice using grammar and vocabulary appropriately before posting their comments in the discussion forums (Krasnova, 2015).

In this online learning process, online discussion forums will play a very important role in the success of the learning process. Students are active subjects in learning. The success of students in learning is influenced by the quality of the student's activities (Widiyanto, 2015). The purpose of this study was to determine the level of student activity in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic using online discussion forum media. One of the supporting elements for student success in the learning process is activeness and getting maximum learning outcomes. Yunita & Wijayanti (2017) explained that the higher the level of student activity, the greater the results obtained. This means that the competence achieved from the learning process can be measured by two indicators, namely student activity during learning activities (student enthusiasm) and the results obtained after the learning is completed.

According to research by Santoso and Hasibuan in Sihotang et al (2015) the triggering factors that can affect online discussion participation rate on e -learning is multimedia-based teaching materials, giving rewards and lecturer involvement in discussion. According to Te Yeh's research in Sihotang et al (2015) instructor involvement in discussions and rewards Values greatly influence students to be actively involved in online discussions on e-learning. Santoso and Hasibuan argue that media content is very influential in the use of e-learning. It is different from Te Yeh's opinion which states that the role of lecturers and the provision of value rewards also determines the effect of using e-learning.

Based on previous research, Nandi (2011), stated that the results of data analysis showed a high percentage of students did not access discussion forums or posts at all throughout the semester. But the results also show that it is important to participate consistently to achieve high scores. There are many factors that contribute to online participation in student activities, namely in terms of content, students themselves, instructors and assessments. In this study, the researcher will also consider some of these factors in student activity. Because these factors are important and also have an effect on student activity. So this study aims to see how active students are in the online learning process using online discussion forum media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the results of research conducted by Alzahrani (2017), the findings of achievement tests and quantitative data on student participation in online discussion forums (ODFs) show that using ODFs to enhance traditional learning can contribute to student achievement, especially when students engage in ODF effectively and efficiently. This may be because using ODF can allow students to participate equally, work socially and collaboratively, and engage in active learning. However, contextual dimensions need to be given a lot of attention, as they can play a key role in determining the effect the use of ODFs on student achievement (Hartnett, 2012).

Alghamdi (2013) investigated the pedagogical implications of the use of ODF in the Blackboard for the improvement of the learning of female students enrolled in professional development and competence study at a private university. He revealed that students in the experimental group scored higher than those from the control class on the post-achievement test. Alghamdi showed that students in the experimental group better understand the concepts of the subject and are better able to discuss various topics. So he

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concluded that "the use of online discussions as a complement to discussions in class" (Alghamdi, 2013).

More recently AlJeraisy et al. (2015) investigated the impact of using ODFs on student achievement in a private university studies courses in the Faculty of Business Administration. This study involved 60 students. Online discussion forum (ODF) only available for the experimental group. They found that the group with access to ODF scored significantly higher. In addition, students who have access to ODFs are more confident about their performance in terms of exam results.

The studies mentioned above indicate that the use of ODF is most likely the reason for the increase in student achievement levels. There are several things that distinguish this study from previous research. The first is in the type of research used, previous studies used quantitative research so that they only used calculations, while in this study the researchers used a mixed method that combines percentage results with in-depth explanations. The second is that the instruments used in the previous study only used observation tables, while in this study, researchers used observation checklists and opened questionnaires. The last one is the indicator used to measure in previous studies using only 5 indicators. According to Widiyanto (2015) the success rate of student learning can be seen from how active the student is in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to know how active students are in class using online discussion forums so that we can find out whether ODFs can be the right learning platform for students so that they can improve student achievement. So this study will find answers whether learning using ODFs will be beneficial for students or not. It will also be useful for teachers to know the right learning platform to use in the learning process.

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1   How do students actively participate in providing comments and having

discussion in written form using online discussion forums?

1.3 Research Purpose

1.3.1 The purpose of this research are to find out how the students actively participate in

providing comments and having discussion in written form using online discussion

forums.

1.4 Research Significance

The author hopes that the results of this study can contribute to the teaching and

learning of English. It has two main significances, they are of theoretical and practical

significance:

1.4.1 Theoretical Significance

The results of this study are generally to determine the level of student activity in

providing comments and feedback in online learning using online discussion forums.

when learning using online discussion forums during this pandemic. It also provides

additional information for other researcher who wish to conduct further research in

related fields.

1.4.2 Practical Significance

For lecturers or teachers, the results of this study can provide an overview to

increase student activity in the online learning process using online discussion forums.

Because the activeness of students in the learning process is very important for the

success of learning.

1.5 Operational Definition

1.5.1 Online Discussion Forum

Online discussion forums is an online discussion feature where people can hold conversations in the form of posts, different from chat rooms in that messages are often longer than one line of text, and are at least temporarily archived. Also, depending on the access level of a user or the forum set-up, a posted message might need to be approved by a moderator before it becomes publicly visible. This study utilizes the online discussion forum as featured in Canvas. Canvas learning platform is an online learning tool that can be reached by anyone, both teachers and students. In this platform, we can have group discussions by posting or commenting on the material that will be discussed in it. The use of this application is very easy and can also be monitored by the teacher. So, this platform is good for learning.

1.5.2 Student Active Participation

Active students are students who are continuously involved physically, psychologically, intellectually and emotionally in the process of comparing the subject matter received. Student activities in the learning process are not only involved in physical forms such as sitting in a circle, doing something, but can also be in the form of processes of analysis, analogy, comparison, appreciation, all of which are students ' involvement in psychological and social aspects.

In this study, students are said to be active if students are active in providing comments, questions and also conducting discussions in written form. In this study, students can be said to be active if they participate in every discussion prepared by the teacher. In addition, it can also be seen from how many students provide comments and

feedback on each post made in the discussion. In the discussion on the , the teacher gives instructions that students must give at least three comments and answer. Based on this, so we can see whether the student fulfills the instructions or not.

1.6 Scope of the research

This is focused on activity in discussion using online discussion forums featured in , participated by student majoring in English in 2018 Muhammadiyah University of Jember. The definition of student activity includes, giving comments, questions or discussing using online discussion forums.