

# PROCEEDINGS

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THAILAND



**20-21**  
**May 2016**  
Bandar Lampung  
University, Indonesia

## 4<sup>th</sup> ICEL 2016

### THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE



# PROCEEDINGS

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

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**4<sup>th</sup> ICEL 2016**

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20 -21 MAY 2016



Organized by:  
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP),  
English Education Study Program of Bandar Lampung University  
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## **PREFACE**

The activities of the International Conference are in line and very appropriate with the vision and mission of Bandar Lampung University (UBL) to promote training and education as well as research in these areas.

On behalf of the Fourth International Conference of Education and Language (4<sup>th</sup> ICEL 2016) organizing committee, we are very pleased with the very good responses especially from the keynote speakers and from the participants. It is noteworthy to point out that about 80 technical papers were received for this conference

The participants of the conference come from many well known universities, among others: International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Malaysia, Hongkong Polytechnic University, Hongkong, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU), China, Shinawatra Univesity, Thailand, University of Texas, Austin, USA, University Phitsanulok Thailand, STIBA Bumigora Mataram, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, STKIP-PGRI Lubuklinggau, Indonesia University of Education (UPI), Universitas Sanata Dharma, State Islamic College (STAIN) of Jurai Siwo Metro Lampung, State University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa and Universitas Lampung.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the International Advisory Board members, sponsors and also to all keynote speakers and all participants. I am also grateful to all organizing committee and all of the reviewers who contribute to the high standard of the conference. Also I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Rector of Bandar Lampung University (UBL) who gives us endless support to these activities, so that the conference can be administrated on time.

Bandar Lampung, 20 May 2016

**Drs. Harpain, M.A.T., M.M**

*4<sup>th</sup> ICEL 2016 Chairman*

## **PROCEEDINGS**

The Fourth International Conference on  
Education and Language (4<sup>th</sup> ICEL 2016)  
BANDAR LAMPUNG UNIVERSITY  
Bandar Lampung, Indonesia  
May 20,21 2016

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## STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING IN ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM

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### Abstract

Online discussion forum is well-known in educational technology development especially in blended learning because it supports the traditional face to face (f2f) class. Online discussion forum is familiar as the leading of critical thinking process. This paper reports about qualitative study on web-based class by using blended learning focuses on online discussion forum. This study is held in order to analyze the critical thinking process that appears during online discussion forum class. This study is conducted with 26 students of speaking class of Bandar Lampung University. Observation and questionnaire are conducted to see critical thinking process during online discussion forum class. The finding of the study will help the further study to develop critical thinking ability.

*Keywords:* Online discussion forum, Critical thinking skill

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, technology is part of human life. The availability of communication technologies and student demand for flexible teaching practices has led to university courses being delivered either partially or fully in an online environment LaPointe & Reisetter (2008) as cited in Mcnamara & Dr.Burton (2009). It means whenever we are, we are always associated with technology especially in educational field. Many universities around the world start providing technology to support teaching learning process. It gives many benefits than traditional face to classroom activities.

As we can see, traditional face to face class is the old way in teaching learning process because the process only involves transferring knowledge from the teacher to students and the students only listen. The students sometimes feel afraid to convey their opinion to the teacher. Even some students are active in the class, but most of them tend to be passive students. It might be they feel shy or they think their opinions are incorrect, but it still cannot be denied that traditional face to face classroom still give contribution in teaching learning process.

Based on that condition, many researchers try to find way to integrate technology with educational process. One of the ways is through blended learning. Stacey & Mackey (2009), state that blended learning is currently conceived as the combination of technology and traditional face to face instruction. It means blended learning provides more interesting and interactive teaching learning process because it not only uses online web based as the main activities but also integrate it with activities in the traditional face to face class. By using blended learning, it can make teaching learning process livelier without neglected the face to face classroom.

One way to assess blended learning is by using online discussion forum. Online discussion forum allows students to say what they think and share their knowledge in online environment.that is whythe use of online discussion forum as the appropriate way to improve students' bravery in conveying their ideas.In this discussion forum, students can post the message to the discussion threads; receive comment or opinion from other students and teacher.

It gives time for students to manage their thought before posting it in online discussion forum because online discussion forum apply asynchronous and synchronous communication. Nicholas (2009)state that "It appears that face-to-face (synchronous) discussions are useful for exploring an issue, while asynchronous online discourse permits more in-depth analysis." It means, Asynchronousallows students to think the idea carefully because they have plenty time to analyze the topic discussion while synchronous provides time efficient because it is available directly discuss the topic. In sort, Synchronous communication is without time delay. Like what Nicholas (2009) said 'synchronous communications take place at the same time. Such as: chatting, phone call, live online interaction, etc.' and for asynchronous communication is time-delay. Such as: Online discussion forum, email.

Ennis (1985:45) defines critical thinking as the reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. And 'Students research the information before making a comment because they did not want to sound unintelligent in front of their colleagues, and they felt that they did not have enough background knowledge in the subject matter' (Du, Zhang, Olinzock, & Adams, 2008).By thinking reasonably, students have

the foundation about what they say, and they will not talk anything. Critical thinking skills include analytic, qualitative reasoning, and problem solving. It is extremely prominence for the students to improve their quality in academic process. As Mc Peck (1990) has noted, to think critically, students need something to think critically about. It means, students are demanded to have many background knowledge to become good critical thinker.

Based on that, Critical thinking is needed during teaching learning process to make students to be able to analyze everything what they get critically because it can help them in the workplace. By using online discussion forum, I want to see the development of students' critical thinking especially from the students of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of Bandar Lampung University in speaking 2 subjects.

### **1.1 Problem Identification**

In speaking class, students tend to be confused when they have to speak because they do not have good management in arranging the sentences in their mind. Most of them say something without thinking critically without any supporting argument. That is why this research is conducted to help the students to improve their critical thinking through online discussion forum. The reasons of doing this research are formulated in form of question "What is the influence of online discussion forum to the development of students' critical thinking in speaking skill?", and the aim for doing research in this topic is to know whether or not using online discussion forum can lead students to think more critically.

## **2. RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 The Concept of Discussion Forum**

Online discussion forum gives chances for students to share their knowledge among them. 'It provides better cognitive and exploratory learning (Haggerty et al., 2001), increases student-to-student discussion and cooperation (Kassop, 2003; Stodel et al. 2006), provides superior learner empowerment (Kassop, 2003), and upgraded critical thinking skills (Shapley, 2000; Collison et al., 2000) as cited in Shanaz (2009)'. It means discussion forum is the suitable way or place to develop students' understanding through conversation which happens in the discussion thread and it can help them to manage and formulate their idea before posting the comment. They can explore the learning process by interacting with other students to argue to the topic discussion in the teaching material. As stated by Lauron (2008) as cited in Craney et al. (2011) that the aim the use of discussion forum to provide a space for students and instructor to explore and discover the knowledge about the topic discussion to achieve the successful learning experience. Prain and Lyons (2000) as cited by Corich et al. (2004) also said that discussion forum gives more chances for the students to expose the wider view than face to face class and help them to develop their perspective. So the students will share the deeper knowledge or point of view about the certain knowledge. Actually, online discussion forum can support the face to face class in order to improve the quality of teaching learning process that concern in students' ability to share the knowledge each other by discussion, like what Kearsley (2000) said 'the most significant applications of computer-mediated communication in e-learning environments are discussion forums'. And based on Laxman (2012) as cited in Miniaoui & Kaur (2014), problem-based learning encourages students to develop critical thinking and self-directed learning skills by actively solving a repertoire of different problems that function as the organizing context for building up content knowledge bases. So, it is very suitable space for using online discussion forum as the media to enhance teaching learning process and construct critical thinking process.

### **2.2 The Concept of Critical Thinking**

Based on Paul & Elder's framework of critical thinking as cited by Xu (2011) the framework consists of three elements; the element of thought (reasoning), the intellectual standard that should be applied to element of reasoning, the intellectual trait associated with cultivate critical thinker. It means these standards help students create quality reason. From the philosophical side like Bailin (2002) as cited by Lai (2011) defines critical thinking as 'thinking of a particular quality—essentially good thinking that meets specified criteria or standards of adequacy and accuracy', and from the cognitive psychological approach critical thinking is "seeing both sides of an issue, being open to new evidence that disconfirms your ideas, reasoning dispassionately, demanding that claims be backed by evidence, deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts, solving problems, and so forth" (Willingham, 2007, p. 8) as cited by Lai (2011). The critical thinking is needed during teaching learning process because it can help the students to analyze the problem before making decision or argument. Case (2005); Kennedy et al., (1991); Willingham (2007) stated that Background knowledge as essential if students are to demonstrate their critical thinking skills'. Therefore background knowledge influence students to take decision or arguing certain problem (topic discussion or material). Mcpeck (1990) as cited in Lai (2011) has noted that to think critically students need something to think critically about. So they have at least little information about certain issues. Harpen (1996) as cited in O'hare and McGuinness (2009) also noted that Critical thinking of the use of cognitive skill and strategies that increase the probability of desirable outcome. It is used to describe

thinking. Those are purposeful, reasoned and goal directed. Those things are involved in solving problem, formulating inferences, calculating likelihood, and making decision.

### **2.3 The Concept of Speaking**

Speaking has important role in learning English because it is used for communication among people in the real life. Based on Liao, (2009: 11) as cited by Darwanto (2014), speaking is an important part of everyday interaction and most often the first impression of a person is based on his/her ability to speak fluently and comprehensibly. So, speaking skill is the most important skill in English because it is the way we communicate to each other, but sometimes the students feel difficult when they speak. One of the problems is formulating idea inside their mind. As stated by Torkey (2009) that "Pre-speaking or explicit planning means giving participants time in advance to plan their speech in term of words, phrases, and ideas". It means the student must plan the speech inside their mind first before producing speech production. According to Alexandrazak, (2011) said that the onset of the communicative era it has been treated as the ultimate goal of language training and its proper development has become the focus of attention of both teachers and learners. It means the speaking skill is very prominence to develop in language learning. It is difficult to have good speaking ability. But most students find speaking skill is quite difficult especially for students consider English as foreign language. They are confused to choose the word that appropriate during conversation. That is why It needs to formulate the idea first. According to Torkey, (2006) said pre-speaking or explicit planning means giving students plenty time to plan their speech in terms of words, phrases and ideas. So, they will think what they want to speak, and formulate the information or idea before producing the speech act. Based on Crookes, (2001: 372) and Ryo, (2005)' requiring learners to write notes on a sheet of paper to ensure that they did in fact engage in planning and that there is evidence of this planning to be removed at the end of the planning period'. Sometimes students wonders about the structure or words that they use. it means they need time to analyze the information and planning the sentences of speech act during performance (Ryo,2005) as cited by Torkey (2006). Planning the idea inside our mind it involves mental process. It can increase students fluency in speaking skill because they have arranged the concept of their speech. According to Mehnert (1998: 84) and (Ryo, 2005) planning the idea can help them handle communicative strains and pressures. It means students can feel more relaxe in delivering their speech.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Online Discussion Forum Class**

The online learning class was supported by using the learning management system Schoology. Schoology is one of the website platforms that support for educational activities. There are many features inside the Schoology, one of that is discussion forum. In this study, the use of online discussion forum is to see the appearance of critical thinking process among students by posting the comment because many studies said discussion forum can lead the critical thinking process. The form of discussion forum inside the Schoology is set in order to provide student's conversation and discussion to specific topic discussion among them. The instructor is the lecturer of speaking class. She is the one who leads the discussion.

### **3.2 The Participant**

The research was conducted in second semester students of English Education Study Program who took Speaking II subject which was a compulsory subject to be taken by the students in enhancing their ability of this skill. There are 26 students – four were boys, and twenty two were girls. They had a wide range of English proficiency, from very basic to intermediate, and they have been learning English for about 12 years, from Elementary School until Senior High School, and also from English Courses. However, most of them are still shy to speak in front of the class; they tend to be passive in speaking English, and find some new vocabularies by using dictionary and some translators programs.

### **3.3 Data collection instruments**

The data were collected from the beginning till the end of April 2016. The two instruments used in this study were observation and students' questionnaires.

#### **1. Observation**

The observation was held during the online class on April 2016. The observation focused on how far they used their thought to respond and give comments among the students in discussion thread. The aims of conducting this observation is to see or measure students' comment to each other whether they analyzed the topic discussion that gave by the instructor or not. Such as: the way they responded to their friend's comment and to the topic discussion, the way students managed their thought before they posted to the discussion, the quality of the respond to the certain topic discussion, the way of the instructor leaded the discussion during the class, the way

they argued about their arguments whether they used supporting idea or not into the comments, and the way they solved the problem that might be appear during the discussion class.

## 2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 10 questions of five-point Likert format: (5) strongly Agree (SA), (4) Agree (A), (3) undecided (UN), (2) disagree (D), and (1) strongly disagree which was distributed to evaluate students ability in responding to the comment on the specific topic discussion. This instrument was developed by the researcher based on the result of the observation and to give strong evidences for the researcher about the critical thinking process that could be happen in students comment during the discussion section. I adapted from some journals that became my guideline in making questionnaire. The questionnaire was made in English because this was suitable with the study program and also there is a student who is from abroad which used English as the second language. The students responded the questionnaire once, after all of the materials had already taught by the teacher. All the responses were collected online through the SurveyMonkey/Google Forms website.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 The number of postings

The data observation was collected during the online discussion forum. There was various number of posting during the discussion. The unit 1-meeting 1 was the first online discussion. The total number of posting was 96 postings, and it was the lowest posting during the discussion forum. It was caused by the students understanding of using Schoology for online discussion forum. They were not familiar with the Schoology, so they felt confuse to use it. The second online discussion activity was unit 1-meeting 2 showed the increasing of the total number of posting. There are 169 number of posting in this session. In the unit 2-meeting 1, the number of posting decreased from the previous meeting. It was only 104 postings. In the last 3 meetings, it showed significant improvement in number of posting. It meant the students were active to join the online discussion forum, and they felt comfortable to join the online discussion forum. The detail information about the number of posting during online discussion forum was showed in the following chart.

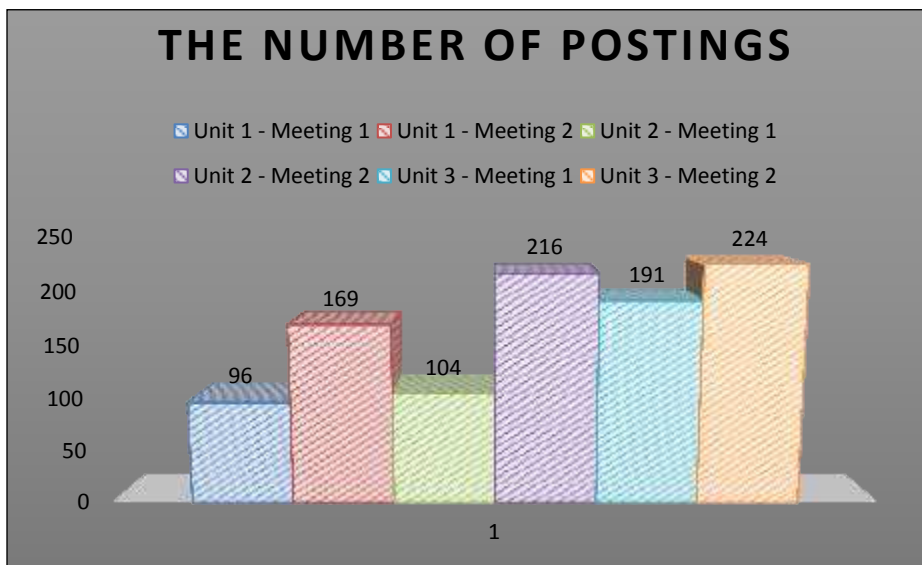


Figure 1: the number of posting

### 4.2 Observation

The data collection through observation was collected during the discussion thread. The figures bellow informed about the situation in the discussion forum.

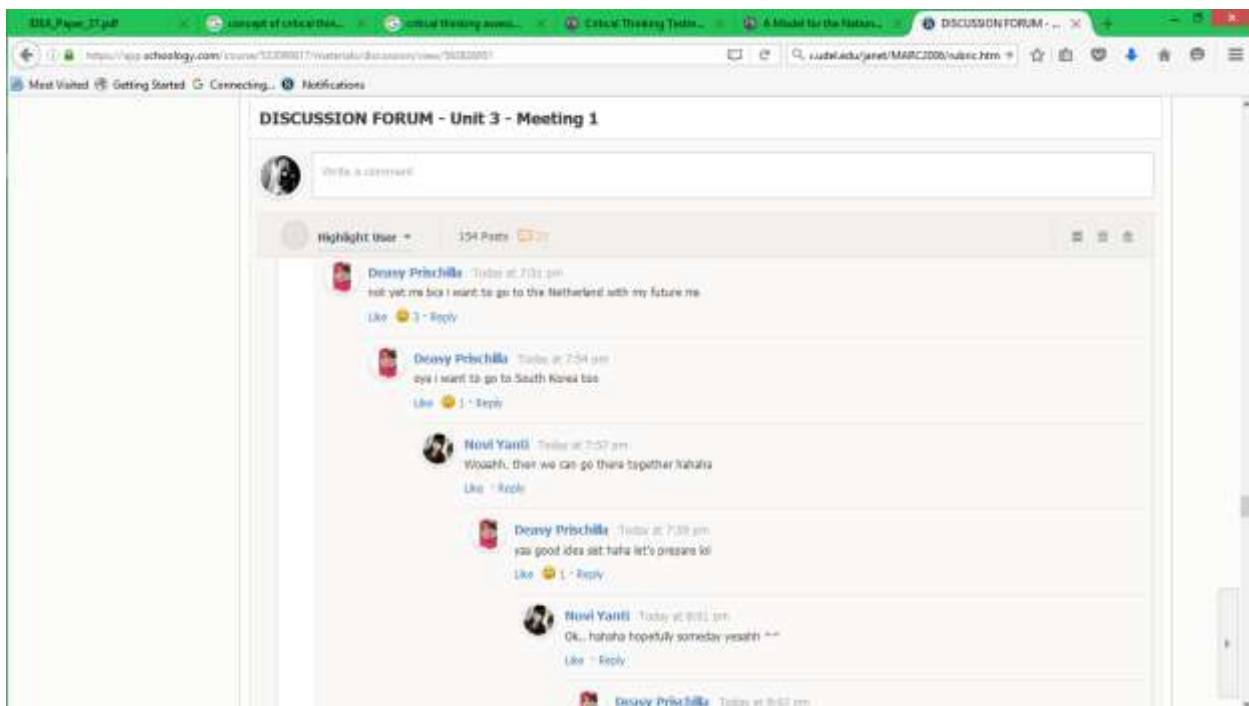
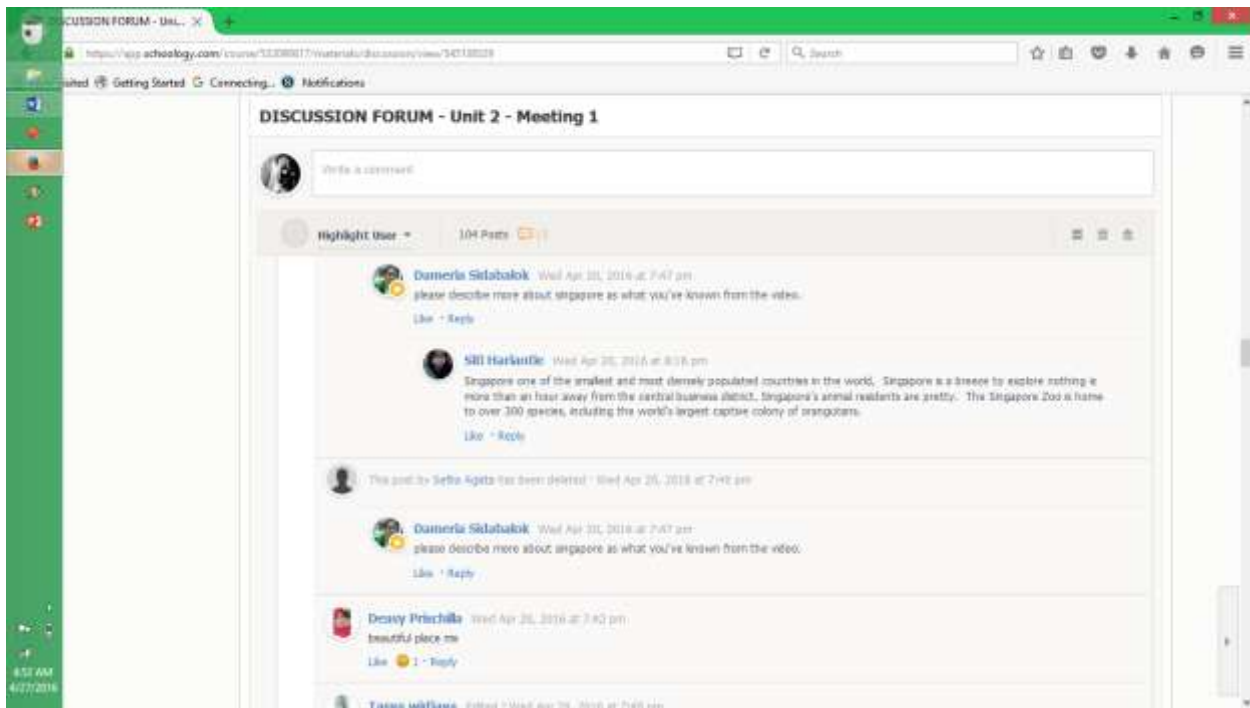


Figure 2. the activities during the discussion class

The beginning of the class started with the teacher posted a welcoming introduction to the students as the warming up to make the online class as natural as the traditional class. Then one by one the students started to reply the posting. After finishing the introduction, the teacher began leading the materials by asking the students' opinions about the certain topic. In this case, the students tried to think and analyzed related information about the topic discussion. They managed their thought carefully before posting it to the discussion thread because their posting would be seen by other students in the discussion forum. They directly did correction on the comments because they did not want to look fool in front of their friends especially in constructing the sentences. They also responded to each other comments and gave an important comment during the class discussion and sometimes they put pictures into the comment as supporting evidence for their comment. These activities would lead the student to the critical thinking process because they tried to analyze and solve some problem (their ignorance) about the certain topic discussion and at the end, they could make decision to post their comment without doubt. I

also found that some student felt free to say the thought inside their mind. Especially for some shy students, they became more confident to give comment or respond to other students' comment. It gave positive effect in order to facilitate shy students to start talking.

Based on my observation, I found that there were still some students who did not care about their comments. They tent to copy paste from the website without analyzing and formulating the information first, so their languages looked sophisticated enough. It was the weakness of doing online class because it could not be controlled by the teacher but at least they tried to give the comment and participate in the discussion forum. In this case, they did not use their thought to respond to the topic discussion and the critical thinking process would not appear in their mind. In general the objective of having the observation was to investigate the online discussion process among students' comments and the way they analyzed and responded to the topic discussion and friends' postings that would cause the process of critical thinking.

### 4.3 Questionnaire

The second data collection that was used is questionnaire. This questionnaire aims to measure students feeling and also to support the observation data about the emergence of critical thinking process when they involved during online discussion forum session. The researcher used a five-point Likert scale to collect participants' answer for each statement with number 1 is Strongly Disagree (SD), number 2 is Disagree (D), number 3 is Undecided (UN), number 4 is Agree (A), and number 5 is Strongly Agree (SA).

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions that contained some indicators or target achievement of this research. The questionnaire had provided answer about the problem or specific argumentation, so the students directly agree or did not agree to the questionnaire. Generally the questionnaire discussed about the experience during online discussion forum class, what they do, how they respond to other comments, the way they analyze the topic or formulate the idea before posting the comment. One of the examples of the questionnaire is shown in the following figure:

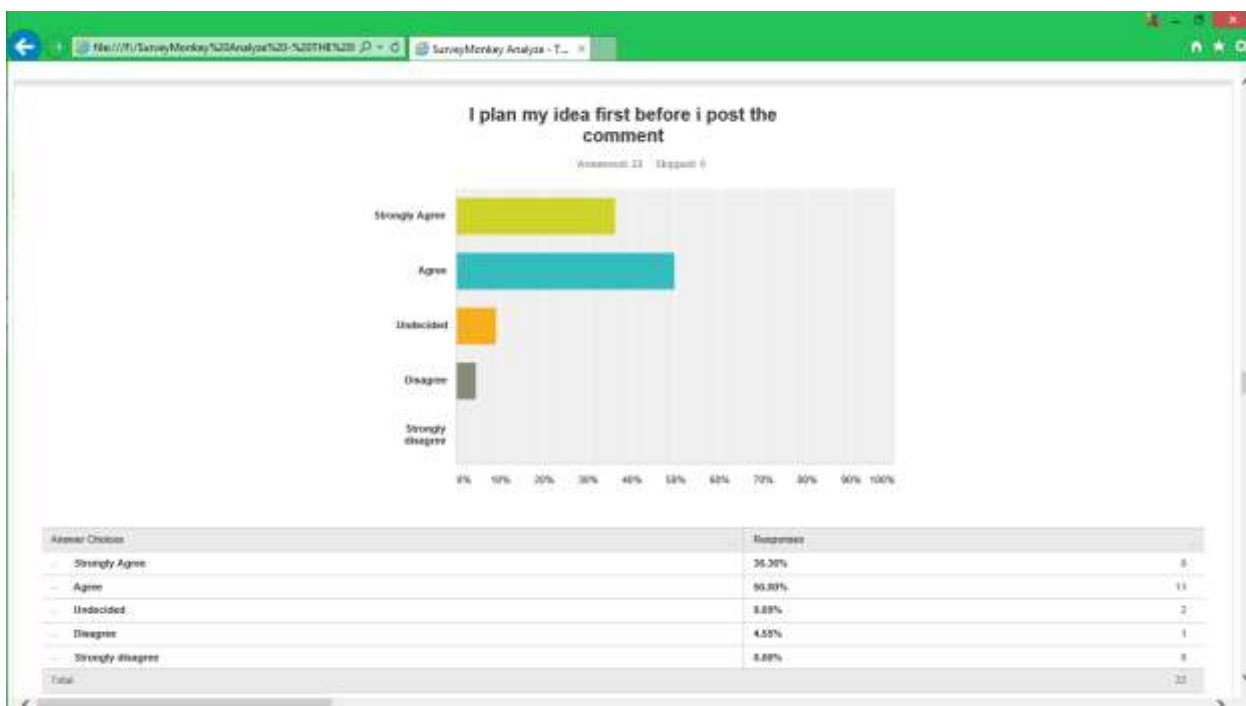


Figure 3: The example of questionnaire and students responses.

This statement aims to investigate students' thought whether they arranged their knowledge first and consulted it by researching the information to support their comments or not. Most of them agreed that they planned the idea before posting in discussion thread. They said the reason why they agreed because by planning the idea first, they would not make mistake or understanding about the topic discussion. It meant the analytical thinking and problem solving appeared during the discussion. They analyzed the topic discussion first then tried to find additional information after that arranged the idea and finally produced the analytical argument. So, during online discussion forum the critical thinking process appeared among students comments.

Therefore some students felt undecided and disagree about the statement of questionnaire but it could not be avoided because there were several of students thinking and ability to respond or analyze the topic discussion. Some students said that they wrote the idea directly without any plan before. It probably happened because they

had background knowledge about the topic. Most of the students agreed that online discussion forum gave time and helped them to increase the way they arranged or construct the idea. The following chart showed the comparison and result of students' responses to the questionnaire.

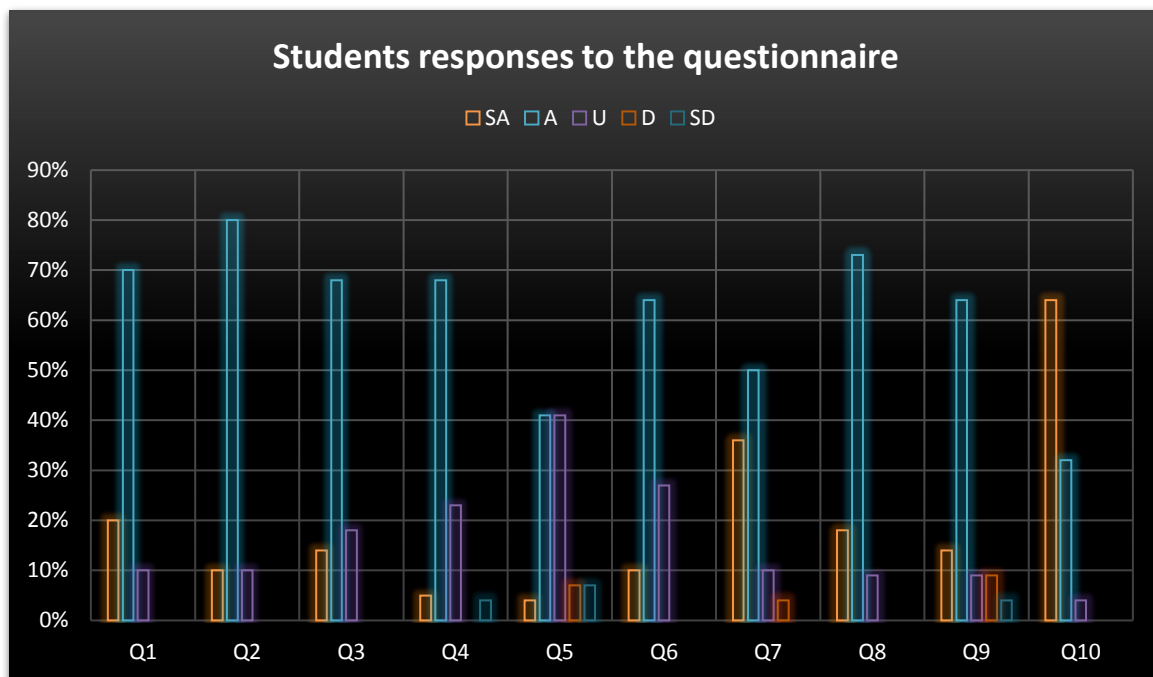


Figure 4: Students responses to the questionnaire

It showed the comparison of general result in questionnaires. The result revealed that the most of the students agreed with the questionnaires that online discussion forum gives them chances for analyzing the information or material. It means critical thinking appear during the discussion, and they agreed that online discussion forum provides them more time to formulate the information before posting it in discussion thread.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Online discussion forum has important role in teaching learning process as supporting media for face to face class room because it provides a place for students to convey and formulate their thought freely. Even though the process of online discussion forum is set as natural as traditional class, all of the students that involve in the discussion cannot see each other. It gives chances for shy students for becoming more talk-active in the discussion thread because there is no facial interaction. They can respond each other comment and share the knowledge.

Based on this research, the experience of the students by having online discussion forum can develop their thought because they have plenty time to arrange their idea. They also can research detail information about certain topic discussion directly, so they have the information to support their idea. By looking from other students comments, they also get the idea to create their own comments. By having good idea management inside their mind, it can influence the way of students' speaking performance because they have constructed good idea first before delivering it into speech act.

Those activities lead the students to be more critical in responding to the issue or topic discussion. At least their critical thinking process appears during the discussion, so online discussion forum has influence to students' critical thinking. This study still has many weaknesses and need further investigation to develop students' critical thinking skill through online discussion forum in order to increase the quality of human thinking.

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