Research Paper   Open Access

The Role of Dialogue in Distance Learning Systems

Titi Chandrawati[1], Dewi Andriyani[2]
[1]*(Universitas Terbuka (The Indonesia Open University)), Indonesia),*
[2]*(Universitas Terbuka (The Indonesia Open University)), Indonesia),*

ABSTRACT: Dialogue in Distance Learning System or Sistem Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh (SPJJ) is a form of communication between learners and learners that can occur in various ways. As described by Moore and Kearsley [1] that learning activities in distance education require media assistance and management in particular. The purpose of writing this paper is to provide awareness of the importance of dialogue in the learning process of the SPJJ so that it can determine the speed of learning materials absorption by learners. Based on a dissertation on the role of dialogue in the SPJJ applied at the Open University (UT), through a descriptive conceptual approach, we will describe the concept of the SPJJ and the various dialogue models in the SPJJ. At the end, the recommendation for the learning designers of various media and learning resources at SPJJ institution such as Universitas Terbuka (UT) is by using dialogue approach in various forms that can be utilized by the learners and instructors in order to help the learners to have a meaningful learning experiences.

KEYWORDS: *Dialogue Concept, Spjj, A Meaningful Learning Experiences*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Distance Learning System or Sistem Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh (SPJJ) in practice has long been known in various forms. There are people living in agricultural, plantation, or ranch areas that are far from urban areas and they want to add skills or gain knowledge, therefore they choose to study at the SPJJ. The reasons of distance and transportation access. Before further elaborating on the SPJJ, it should be reviewed a little about the learning process in a learners' self. From the various experts, that learning is a mental process that occurs in a person so that ultimately lead to different changes in individual behavior between before and after beyond the mental process[2, 3]. While the word learning means the process of interaction that occurs between a person who learns with the source material (can be a teacher or tutor or instructor or non-human source). In the context of SPJJ, the learners (learners) with the conditions described above are either remote or separate from the source, so that the process of interaction between learners and sources is replaced by media or teaching aids. In principle, learners apply self-learning to SPJJ.

The simple practice of SPJJ is "Home Schooling" for primary and secondary education, where learners engage in self-learning with modules or other sources, and also with tutors as instructors or facilitators or companions. At the higher education level, the Open University is an institution that implements the SPJJ. In Indonesia, Open University (UT) develops the module as the main source that replaces lecturer function for students, besides also students can utilize non print media containing enrichment material. However, the learning process that passers must learn through UT is by self-learning. Therefore, to support the student's independent learning process, UT provides a range of learning services that assist students in mastering the material. One of the students' self-learning support services is through Online Tutorials (Tuton) and Face-to-face Tutorials. In both of these activities, there is interaction and communication between learners and learners. According to Meier[4], in the self-study of every human being has four elements, namely the preparation, delivery, training, and appearance of the results, and in each of these elements there is communication and dialogue that must occur either among fellow learners or students as well as among students with learners (can be tutor or facilitator or instructor or lecturer). Thus, communication or more specifically a dialogue, is something that can not be ignored in a learning process however the learning model takes place.

This paper will describe in more detail about the concept of dialogue and the need for dialogue in learning using SPJJ as in UT, as well as various dialogue models appropriate to be applied in UT. The description of the importance of dialogue in the SPJJ is intended to enable UT to develop a learning support service that promotes dialogue as one of the aspects that can attach students' understanding of the material to which students ultimately succeed in learning.

II. METHOD

This study uses systematic review, while the stages in the systematic review of this study areFormulation of the problem, Search for literature, Literature Selection and Analysis and interpretation. At formulation of the problem, the researcher will select a topic that suits the researcher's expertise. In step search for literature, the researcher will search the relevant literature with the research. This step helps researchers to get an overview of the development of research related topics raised. Literature Selection. The journals that have been obtained are then filtered based on their relevance to the research undertaken. The journals to be analyzed are those that are relevant and highly relevant. The journals are then analyzed and interpreted. Analysis is done in several ways, among others: a) Finding the similarity (Compare), b) Looking for inequality (Contrast), c) Giving a view (Criticize), d) Comparing (Synthesize), e) Abstracting (Summarize).

III. FINDINGSANDANALYSIS

3.1 Position of Dialogue in Distance Learning

Naturally, every human being as a social being has a need to interact, communicate with each other. The basic form of short communication can be dialogue. General understanding of dialogue is a conversation between two or more people to understand and accept what is being said. While Freire[5], interpreted dialogue as a form of encounter between fellow human beings through the world to name the world. In the context of learning, the dialogue processed by Freire involves two or more people to observe the world, so the educator's job is to convey the learners or learners to see the world through questions. Whereas according to the Oxford online dictionary, dialogue as a noun, means a conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, a play or a movie, as a verb, a dialogue taking part in a conversation or a discussion in solving a problem. Chandrawati [6] states that dialogue can serve as a way to gain multiple perspectives for students to explore important aspects of educational understanding with their own lives, both of which can have a major influence on the creation of an understanding. This goal can be achieved if among students strives to understand each other's ideas in order to assist them in naming their world.

There are a number of advantages of the process of dialogue in learning, such as developing critical thinking skills in learners, building understanding and learning about the phrases of their own words and the words of friends of others. In addition, the dialogue also makes the learning process linked, the view of teaching being connected as well as the process of building a relationship that requires dialogue. Furthermore, dialogue can also make educational efforts meaningful in order to serve the needs of many people such as individual, interpersonal and organizational needs, during the process of working toward the effectiveness of organizational and community functions and welfare, and for humanity as a global individual[6]. Meanwhile, Moore [1] also reinforces the role of dialogue in the perspective of distance learning. He said that dialogue is a major factor to understand the learning process that occurs in distance education. However, in some cases, it seems that the learning process of the SPJJ is more likely to use a monologue due to efficiency considerations when the SPJJ is practiced as a mass education [7]. However, it is possible for more dialogical forms of interaction with the SPJJ, such as Garrison and Archer [6] emphasized that by using written interactions through letters, e-mails, tutorials, telephone and internet programs, it is possible to maintain dialogue between communities learning in the SPJJ. While Freire [5] states that dialogue provides meaningful and productive learning through deepening or attention to others, through respect, by creating and working in a safe learning environment, and enabling the development of forms of critical engagement.

There is some evidence to suggest that the role of dialogue in the SPJJ is significant. As expressed by Moore [1] that dialogue in the SPJJ can improve interaction in the learning process and bridge the distance that learners face to access the material. Caspi and Gorsky[8] also elaborated on the benefits of dialogue as a result of the categorization of all learning activities activated through some of the structures and human sources created by learners. In addition, understanding the role and value of dialogue between learners and teachers can also be an important key in understanding the learning process in the SPJJ [1]. Because of the role of dialogue in the SPJJ, some experts recommend that the aspect of dialogue in the SPJJ is considered an important aspect and continues to be developed. As suggested byMoore and Kearsley [1] and Chandrawati [6]each proposes that (1) dialogue should be part of distance transaction in the SPJJ, (2) dialogue as an interaction or communication theory , and (3) dialogue as a learning community. This is reinforced by the statement of Moore and Kearsley [1] that the complex nature of dialogue evolves in line with the significant development and growth of distance education becoming advanced originally from traditional correspondence studies to the use of digital education technology.

Dialog Model in SPJJ Due to the implementation of SPJJ by UT, then there are some learning patterns that take place in UT. All UT students must have printed materials or modules to be learnt as their independently, plus non-printed materials containing enrichment materials (not all courses). In addition, UT also provides learning support services such as face-to-face tutorials and online tutorials. According to Belawati, Padmo [9], tutorial activities are required by UT students due to cultural factors and their educational

background that are expected to require guidance from tutors or instructors. There are two forms of tutorials that are face-to-face tutorials and online tutorials. Internet-based online tutorial, has advantages for students who can not come to gather on facial tutorial activities. Students can manage their own time and anywhere as long as there is an internet connection. Below we will outline some of the dialogue models that are being addressed and discussed by experts in the SPJJ1 field. Dialogue models in distance education by Caspi and Gorsky[8]Dialog are central to learning in the context of distance education.

Dialogue may be intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogue [8]. Intrapersonal dialogue is used when learners use their mental processes to engage in learning. This happens as when students are studying independently reading modules, using non-printed learning materials as enrichment can include listening to audio tapes, or viewing educational video footage, or doing exercises. The form of intrapersonal dialogue is reflective practice. In the UT context, tutors have a challenge to help students understand reflective practice. Further interpersonal dialogue that occurs between students and tutors can serve as a form of socialization and to study the subject. In other words, dialogue can serve as a collaborative reflective practice. Questioning, debating and re-thinking activities are important activities for the dialogue process. These activities can encourage tutors and students to change their perspective as well as others in the context of their world of working and living in the future. So the dialogue approach put forward by Caspi and Gorsky [8]can be integrated at the time of developing learning materials and while preparing for pedagogical interaction as well as in tutorial.

3.2 Dialogue model in distance education

According to [1], with the theory of transactional distance, dialogue is another particular form of interpersonal interaction. In a dialogue, each party is a good and active listener. In the absence of dialogue, the transactional distance becomes high resulting in separate learners and instructors. In web-based learning there is dialog in a simple structure, so that the level of transactional distance is relatively low. Moore emphasized that the level of dialogue and structure levels may vary from 1 course to the other. It all depends on the instructor's point of view in determining the dialogue, as well as the learner's capacity when engaging in a dialogue and also the characteristics of the material being discussed.3. can be called guided didactic conversation. Instructors play a role in facilitating the learning process among learners. Conversations in learning activities are intended to address the spread of unidirectional information. Learners should be treated as peers of partners who are knowledgeable, experienced, and have good capacity so as to contribute to the actual communication atmosphere. In this approach, a dialogue such as a two-way traffic flow and empathy aspects are included in this dialogue approach that can be applied by learners and their instructors in distance education.

3.3 The challenge of using dialogue approach in SPJJ

In the research on dialogue in online tutorial activities in the early childhood education or Pendidikan Anak usia Dini (PAUD) study Program, Chandrawati [6] finds some things about the prospects of a dialogue approach that can be meaningful especially for students in their learning process, and summarized in the following description. (1) PAUD students have a positive attitude towards the dialogue approach and believe that dialogue can help their independent learning process, (2) some of the PAUD students admitted with dialogue approach to help them become better kindergarten teachers, (3) students and tutors are equally enthusiastic to learn more about the use of the dialogue approach and practice it in the tutorial activities.

From the results of the above research, there are a number of challenges to using the dialogue approach in the SPJJ context as in UT. The number of UT students is very large and the students' existence with each other can be very far apart and do not have adequate access. This makes it difficult to provide training in the same time. So the alternative handling requires patience and repeated actions in stages. The most important is the long-term commitment of the managers and facilitators. Another challenge facing UT is an attempt to trigger UT students to participate in dialogue-based online tutorials. Because it takes the internet to be able to follow the online tutorial, then that should be a concern is the quality and equity of existing internet connection. For the case in Indonesia, the internet network has not been evenly connected throughout the Province with good quality so that it can be a challenge for SPJJ institutions such as UT in organizing online tutorial activities. Another thing that challenges UT to a dialog approach in online tutorials can work well is UT students' skills in computer operations and unequal ownership of computers. According to Chandrawati [6], students of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) programs who follow online tutorials do not yet have an awareness of the benefits of the dialogue approach. That dialogue is not just a conversation between students with tutors, or answering questions given by tutors, but students ignore the process of interaction with other students such as in online discussion forums even students have not taken advantage of opportunities to obtain academic counseling from tutors. From these findings, it seems that it will take a lot of time and a comprehensive effort to familiarize the concept of a dialogue approach to students and tutors, as well as how the dialogue approach can be applied in online tutorials and tutorials. This is because students and tutors are familiar with the approach to learning to memorize. Another challenge according to Chandrawati [6] is related to student writing skills. Many of the students have difficulty in pouring their thoughts in writing in online tutorial forums, so it is advisable to focus

on developing a dialogue approach in face-to-face tutorials rather than on online tutorials. From the description of the practice of using dialogue approach on online tutorial activities conducted by UT as an institution implementing SPJJ, it seems that there are several aspects that need to be prepared in order to apply the dialog approach to SPJJ successfully ie the skills required by students and instructors or tutors related to the ability to write, ideas, and skills related to the operation of hardware if online tutorials. In addition, the ability needed for a successful dialogue approach is the understanding between learners and resource persons about the concept of dialogue itself that should be good and deep.

IV. CONCLUSION

Dialogue is a specific approach in interacting within a group. Dialogue is different from debating or simple discussion. It takes certain criteria to identify dialogue activities especially for the SPJJ. The dialogue approach used in the SPJJ was developed on the basis of social constructivist theory, making it a very good combination of dialogue approaches in online tutorial activities. The practice of dialogue approach on the online tutorial activities conducted by UT tells that learners and instructors or tutors need to understand correctly about the concept of dialogue. There are several skills that need to be honed such as writing skills, and computer literacy skills. Dialogue as a learning approach that seems to be a trivial thing has the power to succeed in learning process especially in the context of SPJJ, so it needs to be deeper to explore the application of dialogue as an approach in various forms of learning especially those implementing SPJJ.

REFERENCES

[1]. Moore, M.G. and G. Kearsley, *Distance education: A systems view of online learning*. 2011: Cengage Learning.
[2]. Hamdayama, J., *Metodologi pengajaran.* Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2016.
[3]. Suprijanto, H., *Pendidikan orang dewasa: dari teori hingga aplikasi.* Jakarta: PT. Bumi Aksara, 2007.
[4]. Meier, D., *The Accelerated Learning Handbook: Panduan kreatif dan efektif merancang program pendidikan dan pelatihan.* Bandung: Kaifa, 2002.
[5]. Freire, P., *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 2018: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
[6]. Chandrawati, T., *Understanding Dialogue In Distance Education: A Case Study in the Indonesian Open University*. 2015, Education:.
[7]. Levine, A. and J.C. Sun, *Barriers to distance education*. 2002: American Council on Education.
[8]. Caspi, A. and P. Gorsky, *Instructional dialogue: Distance education students' dialogic behaviour.* Studies in Higher Education, 2006. **31**(6): p. 735-752.
[9]. Belawati, T., D. Padmo, and E. Sinar, *Application of Educational Media at Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia.* Educational Media in Asia, 2005: p. 137.