Indonesian Tesol Journal, 4(2), 118-127 (2022)

INDONESIAN TESOL JOURNAL

e-ISSN: 2622-5441(Online) Journal homepage: https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/ITJ/index

The use of Mentimeter as a medium for discussion in the EFL classroom: Students' and teachers' perspectives

Leonardho Jackly & Fransisca Endang Lestariningsih
Duta Wacana Christian University, Indonesia

Abstract: *This study investigates the extent of the use of Mentimeter interactive presentation software in classroom discussion, and examines the perspectives of students towards Mentimeter as discussion media. A qualitative method was applied in collecting data from the participants. Three students were interviewed regarding the extent of the use of Mentimeter and their perspective about Mentimeter as discussion media. The findings from the interview results show that Mentimeter is a versatile and simple app that can be utilised to support learning activity. Mentimeter is used mostly for elicitation activities, brainstorming, and for clarification during a lesson. The students acknowledge that the anonymity provided by Mentimeter makes them feel safer in participating in class discussion. In addition, this study could become a reference for teachers using and implementing Mentimeter in the classroom.*

Keywords: *Mentimeter, class discussions, interactive*

INTRODUCTION

In order to have active learning, engaging and encouraging student participation in the learning process – giving opinions and having discussions, for example – is important (Gauci et al., 2009; Harunasari & Halim, 2019). Yet, in reality, some teachers still become the centre of the class, which makes students pay attention mostly only to the teacher rather than thinking or giving their opinion in the class discussion (Gauci et al., 2009). However, in this era of technology, where most of the learners are already accustomed to the online environment, online discussion could be one of the solutions to engage and encourage students' participation in discussion (Qamar et al., 2019). As mentioned by Qamar et al. (2019), most of the learners nowadays already have smartphones in their hands. Therefore, online discussion could be utilised to exploit the smartphone's potential.

One of the online discussion platforms that could be utilised is Mentimeter. According to Crump and Sparks (2018), Mentimeter can encourage students to join the discussion by giving their opinions in response to open-ended questions, having direct feedback, and even anonymously expressing their ideas. Moreover, because Mentimeter can be accessed by the students through their mobile devices, it saves time and makes the learning process itself more effective (Little, 2016). Focusing on the utilisation of Mentimeter as discussion media, Vallely and Gibson (2018) report that Mentimeter can make a discussion become

more effective and active since all of the students can write their questions or opinions simultaneously. So, it makes discussion activity run effectively.

In some countries, where English is considered a foreign language (EFL), expressing ideas in English is still a challenge for teachers and students (Zhang, 2007). Furthermore, Zhang (2007) states that most EFL learners have difficulties communicating their thinking, caused mainly by their low proficiency in English. Harunasari and Halim (2019) further state that most EFL learners feel anxiety in conveying their ideas in front of their friends. Thus, this article aims at finding the extent of the use of Mentimeter as discussion media in an EFL classroom, and examining the students' perspectives on the use of Mentimeter as a medium of discussion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The point of classroom discussion is to share with other students the experience of giving opinions, solving problems or reacting to a topic (Markel, 2001). In order to ease such discussion, technology can be utilised, as there are various types of discussion tools, including Mentimeter. As such tools are aimed at putting the user at ease, the interface should be simple to use. Moreover, the key to having a discussion is students actively sharing their thinking and receiving feedback in order to be engaged (Salter & Conneely, 2015). Mentimeter is one of the discussion tools that can ease the user, and the students can receive live feedback from the teacher (Musliha & Purnawarman, 2020; Vallely & Gibson, 2018). The features provided in Mentimeter make the discussion more active and coordinated. Moreover, Mentimeter minimises the feeling of being judged, because students can promote their ideas anonymously (Mayhew et al., 2020).

There are several studies of Mentimeter. First, a study about the use of Mentimeter as a student response system conducted by Little (2016) finds that it offers a new atmosphere to the learning process. Activity becomes more varied, and the software can engage students' activeness in joining a discussion. The findings of this study, however, did not figure out whether or not this activeness was effective in triggering the discussion process in the classroom. This question was answered in another study conducted by Vallely and Gibson (2018) who explore the utilisation of Mentimeter to engage students in three main areas: giving an opinion, expressing ideas or concerns, and anonymous discussion. They find that using Mentimeter to engage students in a discussion enables the students to utter their ideas without feeling anxious or hesitant about their answers, since they can express them anonymously. In Indonesia, a study by Andriani et al. (2019) used Mentimeter to enhance students' critical thinking and creativity. The researchers report that Mentimeter is more interactive and easier to use, as it can be accessed from mobile devices, including smartphones. This study strengthens the finding that using Mentimeter in the discussion process offers an effective alternative method to initiate more deeper discussion. Therefore, conducting a study about students' and teachers' perspectives on the use of Mentimeter as discussion media is important. Additionally, research conducted by Puspa and Imamyartha (2019) related to the implementation of Mentimeter in the classroom and its effect on students states that the students gave positive feedback on Mentimeter, reflected in the students' improved learning. Vallely and Gibson

(2018) state that Mentimeter can be utilised to encourage learners to express their ideas in written form, so EFL learners can first write down their ideas in a Mentimeter discussion. Moreover, it can also help the EFL learners who have anxiety in expressing their ideas to become more engaged to participate in the discussion. The number of research findings that Mentimeter is a good tool to trigger students' activeness is sufficient to be a framework for this study, which was conducted among English education majors at one of Indonesia's private universities, and investigates EFL students' views on Mentimeter.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to collect data from the participants, this study used a qualitative method, where data were collected by interviewing the related participants. Use of a qualitative method was considered in pursuit of a piece of in-depth information or data regarding a phenomenon occurring in the research context (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Moreover, the use of the qualitative method helps this research to gain data about the participants' perspectives. Through this method, the researcher of this study can also gain flexibility in understanding a particular belief of the participants.

Further studies have become a consideration in using the qualitative method in this research. According to Gerring (2016), the qualitative method mainly focuses on particular participants and contexts. In addition, the qualitative method is employed to describe particular beliefs or perspectives that occur in a specific context (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). The qualitative method also gives the researcher a chance to interact with participants and gain deeper information (Urrieta & Hatt, 2019). In short, by using the qualitative method, this study can obtain focused and more profound information from the participants.

The data findings are from interviews with five participants, consisting of two lecturers and three students. The lecturers were chosen based on an investigation into which of them used Mentimeter within their instructional methodologies; whereas the student participants were taken randomly from classes that used Mentimeter. The participants' identities were converted into pseudonyms, as follows, David (male, lecturer 1), Maria (female, lecturer 2), Deborah (female, student 1), Martha (female, student 2), and Esther (female, student 3).

The duration of each interview was 15 to 25 minutes. The interviews were conducted over at least a week, and were separated into two parts – the first with the students, and the second with the lecturers. Furthermore, the recorded interviews were processed through thematic analysis by transcribing each recorded interview, translating it into English, and coding the translated transcription (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Sundler et al., 2019). Through this process, the data interviews could be analysed systematically. The findings from the interviews could be processed into emerging themes to answer the research questions. The themes were derived from similar keywords (at the coding step) that appeared in the transcription of each interview question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the interview results with the lecturers and the students, some keywords, such as elicitation activity, reviewing and clarifying the material, assessing, lecturing, and triggering or encouraging, have been determined through coding. From those keywords, two themes came to light, related to the extent of Mentimeter use as a medium of discussion. In Table 1 below, the emerging themes of the research question are presented.

Table 1. *Emerging themes on the extent of the use of Mentimeter as discussion media*

No.	Themes
1.	Mentimeter is used for elicitation activity, brainstorming, polling, and reviewing previous material.
2.	Mentimeter is used for having an interactive presentation, clarifying things in the middle of the lesson, and assessing the students' comprehension.

Theme 1. Mentimeter is used for elicitation activity, brainstorming, polling, and reviewing previous material.

We found some activities which could be conducted through Mentimeter that usually occurred at the beginning of the lesson. The lecturers, David and Maria, reported that Mentimeter was being used for elicitation activity such as brainstorming ideas about the topic to be learnt, reviewing previous material, or polling, as stated in the table below:

Table 2. *The lecturers' responses towards theme 1*

No.	Participants	Response
1.	David, lecturer 1	"…I also use it (Mentimeter) for polling, brainstorming, or the activity at the beginning of the class."
2.	Maria, lecturer 2	"I use it (Mentimeter) for opening the class or filling the activity in pre-teaching – so for elicitation."

Moreover, similar findings are also reported from the students' point of view, as Mentimeter is used as an opener for the lesson. For instance, Deborah and Esther mentioned that Mentimeter is employed to brainstorm decisions or ideas at the beginning of the lesson. Additionally, Martha reported that Mentimeter is also used to measure the students' background knowledge about specific topics in her class. They commented:

Table 3. *The students' responses towards theme 1*

No.	Participants	Response
1.	Deborah, student 1	"Like I mention before, when we do polling, asking the students' opinions, or brainstorming about decisions in the class."
2.	Martha, student 2	"…so, before we get into the lesson, the lecturer gave us questions through Mentimeter to see how far is our knowledge. After that, we discussed the answers."
3.	Esther, student 3	"…from semester one, we already have like question and answer using it (Mentimeter) and having brainstorming at

the beginning of the class."

From the excerpts above, a conclusion can be drawn that Mentimeter is used mainly at the beginning of the class for polling or brainstorming ideas. The intention of implementing an online application like Mentimeter at the beginning of the lesson is so that students pay attention, since technology is so relevant to millennials (Cahyani & Cahyono, 2012). Moreover, according to Sari et al. (2020), the use of online apps like Mentimeter can create a positive mood in the class. So, by having an online app like Mentimeter, the teachers intend to give a good impression and use something that is relevant to the students in order to gain their participation. Moreover, a study by Krentler and Willis-flurry (2005) reports that the use of technology media in a class can significantly increase students' engagement in joining a lesson. Hence, utilising technology in classroom activity, especially at the beginning of the lesson, increases students' engagement with the learning activity. As demonstrated by the excerpts, these findings could become a reference for teachers about the suitability of online apps or media for elicitation activity. Moreover, they can see how far Mentimeter can be used as elicitation, as, from the excerpts, both lecturers and students share the same most frequent activities found at the beginning of the lesson.

Theme 2. Mentimeter is used for having an interactive presentation, clarifying things in the middle of the lesson, and assessing the students' comprehension.

The lecturers reported that, besides being used for elicitation activity, Mentimeter also offers active interaction during the lesson, for clarifying points when students seem passive about asking, and assessing students' understanding about the topic or lesson. David mentioned that Mentimeter is like PowerPoint, but more interactive, as its layout is in the form of slides where he can include an interactive activity in each slide. Moreover, he also reported that he sometimes uses Mentimeter to gauge a student's understanding of the topic being taught. Maria found Mentimeter a really helpful app, as she could utilise it to ask the silent type of class to ask questions in order to clarify things. They commented:

Table 4. *The lecturers' responses towards theme 2*

No.	Participants	Response
1.	David, lecturer 1	"…for interactive presentation and assessment, so it can be used as a quiz but not for grading, like practice. The format of Mentimeter is like PPT slides so that we can use it as a presentation. In the middle of the slides, we can input interactive discussion where the students can directly see their responses on the screen. So, most of the time, I use Mentimeter as an interactive presentation with some practice or discussion in the middle of the slides."
2.	Maria, lecturer 2	"…I found it (Mentimeter) also really helpful, for example, afford the students to ask or clarify the lesson, because most of the students will turn silent if we ask a question like 'are there any questions?'."

Furthermore, a similar finding was reported by a student aware of the lecturers' intention when using Mentimeter in the class. Esther stated that most of the students in her class tend to be silent even though they have difficulties in

understanding the lesson or the topic. Hence, she thinks that lecturers who start to use Mentimeter to accommodate them realise that the students need media to convey their difficulties.

Table 5. *Esther's response towards theme 2*

No.	Participants	Response
1.	Esther, student 3	"…most of the students who have difficulties were afraid to ask the lecturers, so I think because of this, the lecturers initiate to use Mentimeter."

Some studies share similar findings to those conveyed in the excerpts above (Musliha & Purnawarman, 2020; Sari et al., 2020). As admitted by David, Mentimeter can be used to generate more interaction with students, so that learning does not focus on the teacher but on the students. Musliha and Purnawarman (2020) mention that Mentimeter can be employed in an interactive lesson where the students can directly give their responses into the Mentimeter, and the teacher can monitor or even assess the students' comprehension level in real time. Additionally, this helps teachers to build a positive impression towards students, and to develop good communication with them. Moreover, as reported by Maria, where Mentimeter is a really helpful app, Sari et al. (2020) note that the features provided by Mentimeter support teachers in having good interaction, so that students feel more comfortable in clarifying points or responding to activities. Furthermore, Cahyani and Cahyono (2012) find that conducting activities, especially interactive ones, is easier using technology in class. In regard to the implications of this, these findings suggest an awareness among students about their teachers' intentions in implementing Mentimeter. Moreover, teachers can also gain a solution to the silent class issue that might appear in their lessons.

CONCLUSION

This study has two main aims related to the utilisation of Mentimeter in classroom activity. The first aim is to focus on the extent of the use of Mentimeter, and the other is to investigate the perspective of the teachers and the students regarding the implementation of Mentimeter. For these purposes, the data collection was carried out through interviewing two lecturers and three students. Based on the interview data and through the coding process, six themes were found and have been elaborated in terms of the aims of this study.

In relation to research question 1, based on the results of the interview, it can be concluded that Mentimeter is utilised mostly to support learning and discussion activity, where it provides various features that teachers can utilise for any kind of learning activity. Moreover, Mentimeter is also used as an opener, to instil a positive mood among students so that they feel engaged in the lesson. The teachers can also use Mentimeter to push students to ask or clarify things in the middle of the lesson. Besides that, Mentimeter can also be utilised to assess students' comprehension, or as a practice aid.

Finally, from the interview results to investigate the teachers' and students' perspectives, the conclusion can be drawn that Mentimeter is a versatile app. First, it helps the teacher in almost every aspect of teaching, such as

providing interactive activity, opening a lesson, lecturing, assessing, and discussing. Moreover, in its implementation, Mentimeter is an efficient and easy-to-use app, especially for the teachers. Mentimeter makes it easy for teachers to give a positive impression at the beginning of the lesson, and to have students actively participate in a discussion. Furthermore, from the students' perspective, by having a discussion through Mentimeter, they feel more comfortable giving responses or opinions, since they need only type their answers.

In regard to the findings of this research, there are implications beneficial to the education field. From the results, both lecturers and students share a similar opinion about the extent of the use of Mentimeter in the class, and in their perspectives towards Mentimeter. However, in the perspective, there is an opposing opinion between students and lecturers primarily related to showing students' responses on the screen. From these findings, teachers can gain guidance about activities, approaches, and the appropriate time of implementation when they decide to use Mentimeter in their class. Moreover, teachers can also take note of opposing opinions from students in order to have a win-win solution in implementing Mentimeter for discussion. Students can also gain insight regarding the intention of their teachers in using Mentimeter. As they recognise the intention and their awareness increases, they may be encouraged to participate actively in discussions in order to support the teachers.

There are some limitations in this study that could be used as a consideration for future studies. Since this study only investigates the use of one app, Mentimeter, there was no comparison of Mentimeter with other apps that might be used as reference for which apps are appropriate for a specific activity. Besides that, the findings of this study may not be appropriate in another context in the same field, since this study collected data using a qualitative method that cannot be generalised. Moreover, this study employed no observation, due to the distance-learning obligation, which also means that Mentimeter is rarely used in the class due to bandwidth and device limitations. Another reason is that data from online class observation would be insufficient since the researcher cannot sense the whole atmosphere, such as expressions, impressions, and the reaction when Mentimeter is used in an offline class.

Furthermore, there suggestions based on the findings and limitations of this study that may be valuable if considered for future studies. First, in regard to the limitations, future studies may explore a comparison of Mentimeter with other apps in the same field. They might investigate other apps that are more suitable for distance-learning conditions. Moreover, since this study uses a qualitative method where data cannot be generalised, future studies may use a quantitative approach in order to extract generalisable data, so the findings of the study can be used as reference in many fields. Besides that, future studies might investigate a different level of participants to research the effect of Mentimeter in a different context. Finally, it is also possible for future studies to focus on investigating not only the perspectives but also the effect or impact of the app on users.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the participants (teachers and students) so that the present study could be successfully conducted.

REFERENCES

Andriani, A., Dewi, I., & Sagala, P. N. (2019). Needs analysis of Blended Learning media to improve students Mathematical creative thinking skills of Mathematics student by using the Mentimeter application. *AISTSSE*. https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.18-10-2018.2287401

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology, Vol 2: Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, Neuropsychological, and Biological.*, *2*, 57–71. https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004

Cahyani, H., & Cahyono, B. Y. (2012). Teachers' attitudes and technology use Indonesian EFL classrooms. *TEFLIN Journal*, *23*(2), 130–148.

Crump, V., & Sparks, J. (2018). Game of phones: Integrating mobile technology into science and engineering classrooms. *Universitat Polit`ecnica de Val`encia*, 247–255. https://doi.org/10.4995/head18.2018.7971

Gauci, S. A., Dantas, A. M., Williams, D. A., & Kemm, R. E. (2009). Promoting student-centered active learning in lectures with a personal response system. *American Journal of Physiology - Advances in Physiology Education*, *33*(1), 60–71. https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00109.2007

Gerring, J. (2016). Qualitative Methods. *Review in Advance*, 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-092415-024158

Hamilton, A. B., & Finley, E. P. (2019). Qualitative methods in implementation research: An introduction. *Psychiatry Research*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2019.112516

Harunasari, S. Y., & Halim, N. (2019). Digital backchannel: Promoting students' engagement in EFL large class. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *14*(7), 163–178. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i07.9128

Krentler, K. A., & Willis-flurry, L. A. (2005). Does technology enhance actual student learning? The case of online discussion boards. *Journal of Education for Business*, 37–41. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOEB.80.6.316-321

Little, C. (2016). Mentimeter smartphone student response system: A class above clickers. *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*, *9*(13). https://doi.org/10.21100/compass.v9i13.328

Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *AISHE-J: The All Ireland*

Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, *9*(3), 3351-3364. https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335/553

Markel, S. L. (2001). Technology and education online discussion forums: It's in the response. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, *4*(2), 1–11. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Technology-and-Education-Online-Discussion-Forums%3A-Markel/f3551f3bb84423a3bf383b8b54268a30b33c9bb7

Mayhew, E., Davies, M., Millmore, A., Thompson, L., & Bizama, A. P. (2020). The impact of audience response platform mentimeter on the student and staff learning experience. *Research in Learning Technology*, *28*. https://doi.org/10.25304/RLT.V28.2397

Musliha, S., & Purnawarman, P. (2020). Using Mentimeter for Eliciting the Students' Responses in Formative Assessment Practice. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, *508*, 318–325. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201214.255

Puspa, A., & Imamyartha, D. (2019). Experiences of social science students through online application of Mentimeter in English Milieu. *ICEGE*, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/243/1/012063

Qamar, K., Riyadi, S., & Wulandari, T. C. (2019). Utilization of Whatsapp application as discussion media in Blended Learning. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, *13*(3), 370–378. https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v13i3.8412

Salter, N. P., & Conneely, M. R. (2015). Structured and unstructured discussion forums as tools for student engagement. *ELSEIVER*, *46*, 18–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.12.037

Sari, A. B. P., Brameswari, C., & Haratikka, H. (2020). Millennial Lecturers' Attitudes in Incorporating the Online Application in the Efl Classroom. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, *3*(3), 337–347. https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v3i3.p337-347

Sundler, A. J., Lindberg, E., Nilsson, C., & Palmér, L. (2019). Qualitative thematic analysis based on descriptive phenomenology. *Nursing Open*, *6*(3), 733–739. https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.275

Urrieta, L., & Hatt, B. (2019). Qualitative Methods and the study of identity and education. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.550

Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences*, *15*(3), 398–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12048

Vallely, K., & Gibson, P. (2018). Engaging students on their devices with Mentimeter. *Compass: Journal of Learning and Teaching*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.21100/compass.v11i2.843

Zhang, Y. (2007). Communication strategies and foreign language learning. *US-China Foreign Language*, *5*(4), 43–48. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Communication-Strategies-and-Foreign-Language-Zhang/fd95738fae15101e844e3bdcb1c9df6a0da6493c