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Widya Oktarini



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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE ONLINE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This case study aims at describing students' perception especially EFL learners on the online learning during the pandemic Covid 19. The data was taken from English Department students who are in the second semester which are taught by the researcher in her class. The data collection was done by using online interview by using zoom meeting in which the students enter the meeting one by one to have the interview. Based on the analysis, it revealed that according to students' perception, online learning is not effective and not liked by the students. They prefer face-to-face or offline class. In details, they stated some reasons, they are: the unstable signal, cannot adjust yet with the online class, the instruction of the assignment is not clear, not effective group assignment because of online interaction, the material of online learning is not so clear. So, they hope the offline class will be done soon. The online learning tools the students like the most is zoom meeting because it is almost like the face to face class.

Keywords: *online learning; EFL Learners*

Online learning is the policy that all of educational institutions have applied to avoid the corona virus breakout. Unfortunately, in the process, it faces many barriers. The two most common barriers are; first, from macro point of view in which we cannot deny that there's just a small effect and progress of this online learning (Mc. Pherson & Bacow, 2015). Second is that the capacity to be successful in teaching digitally tends to be different based on the width of learning outcome range which guide priority of institution and education (Liguori & Winkler, 2020).

These barriers exist because to change the learning system from face to face to online learning is not easy to do, both for lecturers and students. This is in line with the opinion

of Crawford, Butler-Handerson, Rudolph, & Glowatz in Adnan and Anwar (2020) who say that moving well from educational environment to virtual and distance learning cannot be done overnight.

Instead, online learning is also regarded has weakness in students' socialization with their classmates. Virtual class cannot attract students who are tactile learners. Conventional classroom outreach is the main thing missing in online learning. Students only communicate with their peers digitally and never see fellow students directly, and thus sharing ideas, knowledge, and information in real-time is partially missing from the world of digital learning (Britt, 2006).

By changing the face-to-face learning model to online learning, it gives different perceptions for various parties. There are several advantages of this learning model, so that this learning has an impact on the learning objectives itself. Therefore, the perceptions of students as learners in online learning itself need to be known in order to be able to be used as an evaluation and input to the lecturer. So they can know whether the students have been fun in online learning and get the material that have been taught well or may be they need to improve the provision of material, instruction, or the appropriate teaching method.

For those reasons, this study is aimed to investigate: 1) what is students' perception on online learning during the pandemic covid 19, especially EFL learners? 2) Which e learning tools among LMS e study, whatsapp group or zoom meeting that students like most as online learning media during the pandemic covid 19?

Perception

Perception comes from the Latin *Perceptio*, from *percipere* which means to accept or to take (Sobur, 2003, p. 445). Experts express different opinions regarding perceptions. Leavitt in Sobur (2003, p.445) defines perception in narrow sense, namely vision, how a person sees something, while in a broad sense it is a view or understanding, which is how someone views or interprets something. According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, perception is a direct response (acceptance) of something. The process of a person knowing things through their five senses. Sugihartono et al. (2007, p.8) suggest that perception is the brain's ability to translate a stimulus or process to translate the stimulus that enters the human sense organs. In human perception, there are different points of view in sensing. Walgito (2004, p. 70) states that perception is a process of organizing, interpreting stimuli received by organisms or individuals so that it becomes something meaningful, and is an activity that is integrated within the individual. The response as a result of

perception can be taken by individual in various forms. Which stimulus will get a response from the individual depends on the attention of the individual concerned. Based on this, the feelings, the ability to think, the experiences possessed by individuals are not the same, so in perceiving a stimulus, the results of the perception may differ from one individual to another.

Online Learning

The learning system by integrating an internet connection with the teaching and learning process is known as the online learning system or virtual learning system (Bentley, Selassie, & Shegunsi, 2012). Online learning is still considered as a breakthrough or new paradigm in teaching and learning activities in which students and lecturers do not need to be present in the classroom. They only rely on an internet connection to carry out the process of learning activities and the process can be done from far away. Online learning is very useful to be used during the covid 19 pandemic, so it is widely used by educational institutions.

Learning media used in online learning include the Learning Management System (LMS) platform, whatsapp, zoom, Googlemeet, youtube live, g suite, edmodo, and so on. The online learning method is how teachers deliver learning materials effectively and also how teachers can develop online instructional strategies. In addition, learning materials in online learning must be made in digital form to attract students' attention.

Research on students' perceptions of online learning has been carried out, including research conducted by Allo (2020). Allo researched the perceptions of EFL Learners students at the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja. He uses semi-structured interviews with English department program students using the Whatsapp application. His research result shows that online learning is good according to students' perception. They also have the perception that individual assignments are better than group assignment, for maintaining distance. However, they also hope that they create groups to help friends

who have difficulty in accessing the internet. Students also hope that in providing material and assignments there will be explanation first, and that explanation should be made with voice notes (voice messages).

In addition, Adnan and Anwar (2020) analyze about online learning in the midst of the covid 19 pandemic based on students' perception. This research analyzes the behavior of Pakistani's students towards remote and digital defense obligations in the midst of covid 19 pandemic. Undergraduate and graduate students are observed to see their perception of online learning in Pakistan. The results showed that online learning could not produce the desired results in an undeveloped country such as Pakistan, where the majority of students were unable to access the internet due to technical problems such as monetary issues. Lack of face-to-face interaction with instructors, time to respond, and loss of traditional classroom socialization are among the issues developing in students at higher education levels.

METHOD

Moleong (2012, p. 4) states that qualitative research is a research procedure that generates data in the form of words both in the oral and written forms of the person and their behavior being observed. According to Mac Millan (1992, p. 144) descriptive research describes the phenomenon occurring in detail. In line with this, Suryabrata (1991, p. 78) explained that descriptive research is research that does not require hypotheses, but tends to describe certain situations of research.

The method or approach used in this research is a case study, because this study focuses intensively on one particular object that studies it as a case. Case study data can be obtained from all parties concerned, in other words in this study collected from various sources (Nawawi, 2003, p. 1). A Case study according to Creswell (2007) is a variation of an ethnography in which researchers provide an in-depth exploration of a bound system (e.g. an activity, an event, a

process, or an individual) based on further data collection.

The data was taken from English Department students who are in the second semester now. These students are researcher's students in the subject Inferential Listening Comprehension class. In collecting the data, online interview by using zoom meeting is applied. Ten students were chosen to be the interviewee. The students come one by one in the zoom meeting and do the interview. The interview used is semi-structured. Sugiyono (2012, p. 233) defines semi-structured interviews as a type of interview in the category of in-depth interviews, i.e. interviews that are more freely conducted when compared to structured interviews.

FINDINGS

EFL Perception on Online Learning during the Pandemic Covid 19

There are some perceptions of EFL Learners on online learning based on the interview that have been conducted, that is:

1. Students feel that online learning is less effective, especially in terms of signals that are sometimes unstable, so students miss the material delivered by lecturers because they have to be thrown out of the zoom application used or through other similar media. This is contained in the student's statement when being interviewed:

“The online class is less effective because we can get trouble from internet connection. Sometimes online class do not give us explanation for the material and sometimes it is unclear”

“I think online learning is more practical. The problem is just about the signal, if the signal is smooth, the online learning will be enjoyable”

“I think I just have problems with the signal in the beginning. I'm a bit shocked because this is the first time to me to face such online learning”

2. Students feel the online learning is less effective because students' not yet been

able to adapt with it. This can be seen in the statements:

“I’m a bit shocked because this is the first time to me to face such online learning”
“Quite helpful, just not yet adapted with the online learning and it is quite difficult to arrange the schedule”

3. Students feel that the assignment in this online learning is not too difficult and some of them can ask for confirmation to the lecturer if they have obstacles in doing the assignment. This can be seen in the statements:

“Not so difficult, but sometimes we are confused about how to find another different source”.

“Not really, sometimes it is difficult, sometimes it is easy”

“Not really, it is difficult to make a video”

“Not really”

“Not really, not all are difficult”

“Not really, sometimes I get confused with the assignment given by the lecturer, but I can ask for confirmation with the lecturer”

“There are some who are difficult, and some others are not really difficult”

4. Students’ feel that the instruction in online learning is not so clear, sometimes they ask for confirmation to the lecturer and sometimes they ask to their friends. This can be seen in the statement:

“Not really, sometimes it is clear and sometimes it is unclear”.

“It is not clear if whatsapp group is used, it is clearer to use zoom meeting or googlemeet”

“Not really, sometimes there is a miscommunication with the lecturer. It is also difficult because we cannot ask the lecturer questions directly. The students sometimes also afraid to ask the lecturer questions”

“Not really, sometimes it is clear and sometimes it is not clear so that I have to ask my friends about it”

“Not really, sometimes I get confused with the assignment given by the lecturer, but I can ask for confirmation with the lecturer”

5. Students feel group assignment is less effective because it is difficult to communicate by online. This can be seen in the statements:

“Group assignment is less effective because sometimes another member of the group don’t do the work. Instead, communication is not effective because sometimes another member don’t focus with the topic of the discussion and sometimes they don’t understand about the material being discussed”

“a little difficult in making a contact with my group members because we don’t meet face to face that we can’t discuss about the lesson easily. The material is also difficult”

“It is difficult to have online discussion so it is less effective because we can not share idea directly”

“It is quite difficult if we don’t meet face to face because there are some students who are shameful to convey their opinion, especially via chat. So, it is difficult to communicate with the group members and share ideas”

“Sometimes the discussion is not effective because of the online communication and discussion”

6. Students feel that online material is not so clear. This can be seen in the statements:

“Not always, because sometimes the explanation is not so clear that some students can’t get it”

“sometimes it is clear and sometimes it is unclear”

“not really, because we cannot discuss with the lecturer directly”

“Sometimes it is clear and sometimes unclear because sometimes I hear a noisy voice at home when we have zoom meeting”

“It’s quite obvious, but the media is not effective because we do the learning online”

7. Students think that online learning tools are effective to use. The most effective tools is zoom meeting, because the lecturer explain the material directly so students can interact directly with the lecturer and ask for the explanation that is not clear. They also think that all of these learning tools support each other, e-study help in doing the exercises, whatsapp group help to explain instruction in doing the exercises, while zoom meeting has a limited. This can be seen in the statement:

“Zoom meeting because if we use zoom meeting the lecturer explain the lesson clearly and students can get the lesson being explained.

“Zoom meeting because in zoom meeting we can discuss directly with the lecturer and can ask questions about material that we do’t understand”

“Zoom meeting because the explanation is more clear and also given example for the material”

“Almost all are helpful, google meet, e-study, whatsapp group also helps. All of these tools support each other. Zoom meeting has a limited time. E study makes the assignment clear”

8. There are some things that students hope in this online learning, they are: Ada beberapa harapan mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran *online* ini, yaitu:

- a. There is sufficient source to support students’ learning and also clearer explanation from the lecturer and hope lecturer uses zoom meeting in order to have online learning more effectively. This can be seen in the statements:

“I wish there will be a reliable source for the material of the subject”

“Explanation to be more clearly. I prefer to use zoom meeting”

- b. Students hope that offline learning is done soon and there is also aid of

data package from campus. This can be seen in the statements:

“I hope the online class is over soon and face to face class is done soon and there will be an aid of data package from campus”

“Hope the learning process will be offline soon so that we can understand the lesson more clearly”

- c. Students hope that signal problem and the system is simplified for the new students who are the first time do online course.

“Hope the signal problem is overcome soon”

“The system is simplified for the new students who have never face the online learning”

9. E-learning Tools that is most Liked by Students as the tools for online learning during the pandemic covid 19

Based on the interview, e-learning tools that is most liked by students to be used as online learning tools is zoom meeting because students can have face to face interaction with the lecturer even though sometimes there is a barrier about signal, but they can communicate and ask directly to the lecturer, so they can understand the lesson. This can be seen in the statements:

“Zoom meeting because if we use zoom meeting the lecturer explain the lesson clearly and students can get the lesson being explained.

“Zoom meeting because in zoom meeting we can discuss directly with the lecturer and can ask questions about material that we do’t understand”

“Zoom meeting because the explanation is clearer and also given example for the material”

The similarities between this research with the previous research is that they analyze the same topic about

learning online from students' perspectives. The result of the research is also the same that is the online learning is not effective. While the differences is that this research is descriptive qualitative research, especially case study to revealed students' perception about online learning, while the previous research is quantitative study and analyze about students' behavior towards the online learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research result, it can be concluded that according to students' perception, especially EFL Learners the online learning is not effective because there are many obstacles to be faced such as the unstable signal, e learning tools that is used by lecturer is not appropriate so the students cannot understand the learning material well, and the group assignment cannot be done well because of the constraints of online communications. Students prefer direct interaction that is face to face class and in this online learning they hope to use zoom meeting or google meet that can have face to face interaction even though not as well as the

“real” face to face class. By these reasons, the online learning tools that is most liked by students is zoom meeting because they can have direct interaction with the lecturer and can ask for confirmation for the material they do not understood, although they cannot deny that another online learning tools like whatsapp group and e study is also support the process of online learning.

This research has a limitation, in which it does not measure the effectiveness of this online learning, because this research just observe from the students' perception. So, for further researcher can make a research about the effectiveness of online learning and can observe from lecturer's perception and can use another approach instead of descriptive qualitative study.

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