Students' Perception of Blended Learning Implementation in EFL Learning

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Blended Learning has been described as a peadagogical strategy that combines traditional face-to-face and online learning. It has become a considerable matter to language teachers all over the world. The present study aims at investigating the students' perception of Blended Learning implementation in learning English at Study Program of English Education. A total of 62 students from two classes participated in the study. A qualitative research involving questionnaire was used as the instrument to collect the data about students perception of Blended Learning implementation. The findings reveal that the students give a positive response to learning delivered in Blended Learning (BL). It can be seen from students' attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction.

Key words: *Blended Learning implementation, students' perception, attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction.*

Introduction

Marsh (2012:1) states that learning a foreign language presents different challenges for different people in different contexts. From this point of view, various methods and approaches should be used to introduce new languages, and a variety of classroom management techniques are employed to maximise practices of teaching and learning.

The initial data of the observation of the EFL teaching shows that the most of foreign language teachings still take place in the classroom, whereas we know from experience that achieving the optimum learning goal poses a significant challenge in most foreign language teaching situations where students have limited opportunities to actively engage in using the

target language. This situation is contrary to the ideal requirement needed in learning foreign language. This is in line with Marsh (2012:1) who claims that students rarely have the opportunity to enter the world of the target language, despite our best efforts to introduce communicative, authentic language tasks into our classrooms.

The implementation of Blended Learning in this study program aims to overcome the problems that exist in learning English as a foreign language, especially in providing learning resources for lecturers and students, and opportunities for the students to practice their language as the target language environment or situation that is similar to the actual situation, as stated by Bath, Debra, Bourke (2010), that to serve the needs of our learners, we need to create an environment that most closely resembles actual use of the target language. They stated that advances in technology provide new opportunities for teachers to design and deliver their courses in ways that support and enhance the teachers' role, the students' individual cognitive experiences, as well as the social environment.

Solution of those problems as stated above could be obtained through online learning. With online learning, students and lecturers have many opportunities to access abundant learning resources for free, both in the form of texts, audios and video books. Besides that, it will not require much money to access learning resources. Through online learning, students have a lot of flexibility in learning because they are not limited by time and place.

Several studies by Benson, Anderson, & Ooms (2011), Lopez-Perez et al. (2011) Jaashan (2015), show that learning that combines face-to-face and online is able to foster motivation and encouragement for students to actively learn. Theoretically the interests and motivations of students greatly influence the process and learning outcomes. Therefore, lecturers need to know the extent of student interest in relation to the implementation of a learning strategy, especially Blended Learning. Because by knowing the perceptions and opinions of students, the lecturer will have the provision of how to implement Blended Learning in learning English, as a foreign language. Moreover, the implementation of Blended Learning in this study program is a pilot project and has never been obtained the best practices of this strategy is implemented.

As the new learning strategy implemented in learning English needs to know how students' respond and give feedback about Blended Learning. How do students perceive the advantages and the challenges of Blended Learning implementation?

Based on the reasons explained above, the authors want to do a study of how students perceive the implementation of Blended Learning in learning in the English Education study program of UNISNU Jepara.

Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the students' perception, attitude and motivation of ICT based learning. Many studies have disclosed positive perception of ICT used in learning. The research conducted by Zamari et al. (2012) concluded that. after being instructed to go on the internet on their own and utilise web-based language learning materials to facilitate their learning, students are able to give both positive and negative feedbacks based on these activities. The research done by Lopez-Perez et al. (2011) revealed that the use of Blended Learning has a positive effect in reducing dropout rates and in improving exam marks. Moreover, the students' perceptions on Blended Learning are interrelated, with their final marks depending on the Blended Learning activities, and on the students' age, background and class attendance rate. The findings of the research conducted by Thang et al (2013) related with effects of Blended Learning on English Language Learning. The Case of Malaysian Undergraduates showed that the students viewed Blended Learning favourably though slow internet connectivity was a problem: Hubackova (2014) has investigated the Motivation in eLearning in University study. Anca Popovici (2015) has conducted a study about students' perception on using eLearning technologies. The research conducted by Ja'ashan (2015), dealing with students perceptions and attitudes towards Blended Learning for English courses at University of Bisha illustrates that the students satisfaction with Blended Learning as it enhances their English skills and helps them to make English learning collaborative, interactive and interesting. Other research by Hambali (2016) investigating students' perceptions toward Online Self-Access Learning (OSAL) in English Language Learning revealed that there is a positive response of the students perception toward OSAL. Alsaied (2017) has conducted the study dealing with Perceived Effectiveness of Social Media as an English Language Learning Tool. Most of those studies concluded that the use of technology in teaching and learning combined with traditional learning are perceived well by the students. ICT based learning give advantages to arise and trigger the motivation to do activities that support the improvement of learning. This research generally deals with the perception and attitudes of the students towards the use of ICT in learning. They are different from the research that has been done by the writer, because the writer focused his study on the implementation of Blended Learning in the English Education Study Program of Unisnu Jepara The writer has investigated the students perception of the implementation of the strategy combining face-to-face and online learning.

Some researchers in Indonesia have also conducted the study in line with the Blended Learning implementation; Blended Learning is shown to be beneficial for students' attitude towards the learning process such as improving active learning as proven by Astuti (2014). This study reveals that The Implementation of Email Exchange As Part of Blended Learning is effective In EFL Writing Class at Universitas Pendidikan Bandung. Aziz (2013) has

conducted the researh dealing with the effectiveness of Blended Learning, prior knowledge to the understanding concept in economics.

Azizan (2010) has also investigated the implementation of Blended Learning in higher education institution in Malaysia and reveals the findimgs that Blended Learning has positive effect on the students motivation. Benson, Anderson & Ooms (2011) has investigated the educators' perceptions, attitudes and practices: Blended Learning in business and management education. The research conducted by López-Pérez andRodríguez-Ariza (2011) reveals that students of higher education have positive perceptions of Blended Learning and prove that Blended Learning has a correlation with students' outcomes. Krasnova & Vanushin (2016) have also investigated Blended Learning perceptions among undergraduate engineering students. The research conducted by Ugur, Akkoyunlu & Kurbanoglu (2009) prove good opinions of the students towards Blended Learning and its implementation in terms of their learning styles.

Methods

Research Design

This research aimed to know about the perception of students about the implementation of Blended Learning in English learning. This research was done using a descriptive quantitative method. Descriptive quantitative research was aimed to test a theory, make predictions, give statistical overview of the relationship between variables, and confirm facts. Descriptive research was the most basic form of research, its aim was to describe or picture phenomenon whether natural phenomenon or human made one (Sugiyono, 2011:297). This research was done in the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teaching Science, Unisnu Jepara in the 2017/2018 academic year.

Population and Sample

Population of this research was all of the students of English Education Study Program Education and Teaching Science Faculty, Unisnu Jepara in 2017/2018 academic year. There were 62 students who have attended learning using Blended Learning strategy as sample for this research; they were taken from two classes of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teaching Science of Unisnu Jepara.

Instrument

The instrument that was used to collect data was a questionnaire. The quantitative data were collected through the questionnaire dealing amount 35 items with the four aspects of Keller's

theory of motivation (ARCS); attention (5) items, relevance (4) items, confidence (3) items and satisfaction (4) items, and one aspect of students' literacy towards ICT (19) items. The items in the questionnaire were sorted out according to the variables they were designed to measure. Positive items were rated from strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1), while negative items were scored in the reverse order of strongly disagree (4), disagree (3), agree (2) and strongly agree (1).

Data Tabulation Technique

The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. This technique was used to know about students' perception of Blended Learning implementation in English learning. These instruments were administered personally by the researchers. Data collection was administered at the end of the term. The respondents were advised to be honest in their response as information obtained would be treated with all amount of confidentiality and used only as data for the research work. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. Participant anonymity was maintained. Questionnaires were distributed amongst the respondents. Data collection was administered in the academic year 2017/2018.

Data Analysis Technique

The data from the questionnaire of this research was quantitative data that would be analysed using percentage descriptive with steps according to Riduan (2004:71-95):
1. Calculating respondent score and each aspect or sub variable.
2. Recapping score.
3. Calculating average score.
4. Calculating percentage by using formula:

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis Criteria Percentage

No.	Percentage	Criteria
	75%-100%	Very Good
	50%-75%	Good
	25%-50%	Good Enough
	1%-25%	Less Good

Source: Riduan, 2004

Findings and Discussion

Students' perceptions of the learning delivered using Blended Learning (BL) focus on four aspects. Three aspects are based on Keller's motivation theory (attention, relevance, and confidence), one aspect is targeting students' literacy towards ICT and one other aspect is of

student expectations. Recapitulation of student perceptions of learning delivered in BL is as presented in Table 1. Recapitulation of students' expectations of online content and BL management strategies are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Students Perception of Blended Learning

No	Variable	Percentage	Descriptiom
1	Attention	74,5	Good
2	Relevance	81	Good
3	Confidence	76,4	Good
4	ICT literacy/Internet	82,4	Very good
5	Students expectation	75,9	Good

Student attention to the learning delivered using Blended Learning strategies is good. Although some respondents have never been involved in BL or participating in BL where most respondents enjoyed the activity. High attention reflects student expectations. They hope that most of the learning needs to be delivered using Blended Learning strategies, and they want to join Blended Learning classes. High attention in Blended Learning is a positive beginning for the implementation of integrated learning. Marzano (1993) states that positive attitudes and perceptions in learning are the first focus of the five dimensions of learning so that learning can be effective. BL has been perceived positively by students and this perception needs to be maintained through good plans. Keller (2000) states that maintaining attention is the last thing that needs to be done in the attention aspect of the Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction (ARCS) motivational models described.

Relevance is the second aspect of the ARCS motivation model. Even though students have high curiosity and very high attention, their motivation will be lost if they do not provide value for themselves. Something that is relevant to the needs or goals will increase motivation (Keller, 2000). Three statement items are associated with the relevance of using technology for students, namely the importance of mastering ICT technology in future life, future learning needs, and the importance of mastering ICT to facilitate learning. Of the three items, the respondent's responses included were very high. Very high responses indicate that BL learning has the potential to increase student participation in learning. Regarding relevance, it is very important to relate the learning experience of students to the experience of using technology as expected by students.

Confidence to succeed is an important aspect of the ARCS motivation model. There are four questionnaire items that are directed at the aspect of confidence. Two items that contain negative statements indicate that some pessimistic students can improve the results of the learning. On the other hand, learning with BL may confuse them. This student response may come from their reflection on internet assisted learning that has been followed. First, ICT-

assisted learning has become a trend now. Lecturers, especially in the city have often given tasks related to learning resources available on the internet, both directly and indirectly. Students, in completing their learning assignments, have relied heavily on the information available on the internet. But unfortunately, the tasks that have been done by students sometimes lack adequate elaboration/discussion on face-to-face learning. In internet assisted learning experienced by students, most of the students position is as "information scavengers" only. The learning assignments given by the lecturer are only completed until the student collects information. Of course, this internet-assisted learning is less effective, students are quite busy, but less contribute to improve understanding.

The results of the questionnaire on ICT literacy showed that 83.8% or the majority of students agreed that they were used to using the internet and looking for information on the internet. This shows that all students who act as respondents have adequate literacy using the internet so that the application of BL does not experience problems due to skills related to this technology. This condition is in line with the study conducted by Trinder (2015). His findings indicate that the Austian University students routinely use various technological tools in their daily lives and show awareness of the potential of ICT for language learning. Research results show that positive responses and skills are key factors in initiating ICT-based learning (Alayar, Fisser, & Voogt, 2012). Of course, the response and skills to use the internet does not guarantee that ICT-based learning, like BL, will be effective. Some research results found that the success of online learning requires students to have the ability of self-directed learning, internal motivation, internal locus of control, collaborative skills, and the character of sharing information (Dabbagh & Ritland, 2005).

As suggested by Means, et al. (2014), BL design must see the needs and expectations of students. Analysis of the results of the questionnaire about students' expectations of online content and BL management provided some information about designing the learning that was submitted BL for students at English Education Study Program of Unisnu Jepara.

First, students expect that the learning indicators in each topic are formulated in detail in the online learning environment (online content). Detailed learning indicators guide students clearly about what they have to master compared to the general formulation.

Second, all respondents expect that online content will be given a summary of material for each indicator. Students' expectations indicate that students have difficulties in finding key knowledge that must be focused on learning from complex information sources, such as exposure in textbooks. Student expectations are in line with what was stated by Talaris Research Institute Marzano (2006) reporting that too much content is not effective in improving learning outcomes. The emphasis on learning on key conceptions and adequate elaboration tends to be more effective.

Third, the task in the form of worksheets is a component that encourages student learning activities. Students become motivated through assignments that will encourage students to actively learn (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Regarding the assignment, the respondent hopes that each topic is assigned tasks according to the indicators. A clear link between important tasks and indicators is made explicit to guide students to reach indicators. Through assignments that focus on achieving indicators, student learning activities are more directed. Knowledge construction will be more meaningful if knowledge is planted in activities. Allen's (2007) confirms this that "meaning making is prompted by problem, question, confusion, disagreement, or dissonance." Essential material is segmented in a piece of material (manageable chunk) and students are given training assignments referring to the material and encouraged to interact collaboratively. Watson (2008) states that training tasks are very important if it is relevant to the goal (indicator), given flexibility in terms of time and place in doing it, contains various types of exercises and problems, challenging enough effort to think, not only remember, and given explanatory feedback (explanatory feedback).

Fourth, the respondent's response to BL management was only 61.7% (good enough). Some respondents think that all learning indicators must have online and face-to-face activities. Face-to-face activities are still a necessity to do. For certain learning does not need to be online, face-to-face in class. This condition reflects that students cannot be separated from the culture of receptive learning that has been traditionalised in conventional learning. Accepting learning culture must be shifted to the current learning paradigm, namely learning in accordance with constructivism views characterised by learning is the construction of knowledge in accordance with their respective learning styles, initial knowledge-based learning, learning oriented meaningful tasks, learning through exploring, hypothesising, manipulating objects, asking questions, finding answers, arguing, and finding, learning through social interaction, and learning through the experience of applying understanding to new contexts. Constructive learning requires the creation of a learning environment that is rich in information sources (material resources) and elements of activity. Today's ICT progress has made it easier for learning developers to create these constructivist learning environments. The progress of ICT has opened up enormous opportunities to shift the tradition of learning to accept (learning to listen) into active and productive learning according to the view of constructivism. The application of BL must be directed to traditionalise learning in accordance with the view of constructivism.

Conclusion

The students of the English Education Study Program of Unisnu Jepara gave a positive response to learning delivered in BL. It can be seen from attention (interest), relevance, confidence and satisfaction. The high perception and initial motivation of these students

needs to be maintained by realising well-designed Blended Learning implementations. Students' expectations about the characteristics of the online learning environment and the management of BL are important to be considered by ICT technology-based learning developers in the institution to obtain an effective learning resources that are in line with the learning needs of students.

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