The Students' Perception towards Blended Learning in EFL Classroom during Pandemic

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Abstract
This research aims to determine the students' perception of Blended Learning in the EFL Classroom during COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher used a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) as a research design. The researcher was collected the data from two schools in Majene regency. The result of this study shows that the students' perceptions in Majene Regency were categorized as "undecided" toward Blended Learning from the questionnaire and interview results. The questionnaire result proved it reached a percentage 68.68%, and it was categorized as undecided based on the score category of the questionnaire in the Likert Scale. Then in the interview result, most students had a tendency to give a positive perception toward offline learning, otherwise, they preferred to give a negative perception toward online learning.
Keywords*: Perception, Blended Learning, EFL Classroom, Pandemic*

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic changed many things in human life. It was affecting the economy, tourism, and even the education sector worldwide, particularly in Indonesia. The World Health Organization recommended that society do social distancing by conducting all activities at home. They were forbidden to do activities outside to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Hence, the activities such as school and office changed to school from home (SFH) and work from home (WFH).

In the educational sector, the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked the closure of schools, colleges and universities (Marliana, 2022). The educational system changed from the face-to-face, or classical learning model became entirely an online class or remote learning. Online classes or remote learning was a teaching and learning process using an internet connection. The students used a smartphone, notebook, or computer to learn. Online learning positively impacted students: they could study everywhere with good hygiene practices to stop the spread of disease, and they got easier to do many things, such as increase their creativity and learn new skills through associated in-class technology (KPI, 2020). In addition, the students were more independent in searching and getting knowledge.

In contrast, online learning also had negative impacts on students. Students in school, even in university, have difficulty accessing online learning because not all have a good network, phone, or computer. They also needed help understanding the material. They were surprised by a new situation they had never faced before. Moreover, many

students dropped out of school due to financial problems in their families. Based on the NBC NEWS survey result in the fall of 2020, 56% stated that students' stress about school increased compared to pre-pandemic students. The students were under pressure toward the pandemic. The study also found that 41% of their effort toward learning was decreased. They were distracted by affecting online classes. Another finding, 50% of students stated that the strength of their relationships with teachers decreased (NEWS, 2021).

Nowadays, the Indonesian government applies new regulations on the learning system during the pandemic, considering the education quality declined during the outbreak and the COVID-19 cases reduced. The Minister of Education and Culture allowed the school to apply blended learning. Blended learning was learning conducted by face-to-face learning mix online learning. Blended learning was a mixture of face-to-face and online learning so that the learning was not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom using a network, Colis and Moonen in (Sari, 2020).

Blended learning was an educational forum, which was traditional and online learning. It might be mixed by technologies, pedagogies, and even job tasks in the learning process. Using Blended Learning, the students can improve their learning experience and learn wherever they were connected by the internet, Castle and Mc Guire (Syarif, 2012). Blended Learning applications supported students' academic productivity performance and positively impacted the students learning process (Rahmanda et al., 2020). Hence, Blended Learning positively impacts students (Talis et al., 2018).

The researcher aimed to get students' perception of Blended Learning, which can be influenced by internal and external factors (Gibson et al., 1984). An internal factor that influenced the perception came from each self. It consisted of some items such as Physiologic, Attention, Interest, Experience, Memory, and Emotional. Otherwise, the external factor depends on the characteristic of the object and the environment involved (Rini, 2015). Perception itself was an intellectual organization of sensory stimuli, both internal and external, connected with a particular person, object, or event, Stone and Neilson (Kosmas Sarkol, 2016). The types of perception were divided into two, positive and negative perception. Positive perception was an individual's judgment of an object or information from a positive perspective or as expected from the perceived object or current regulations. Meanwhile, individual impressions of particular items or information with unfavorable perspectives, contrary to what was expected from the object or existing rules, were known as negative perceptions (Ramlah, 2020).

SMA Negeri 1 Majene was one of the schools in Majene Regency that have applied Blended learning since 2021. Unfortunately, after observing five classes, the researcher found some problems in the learning process where the students gave bad feedback, for instance, watching videos and playing games in class. Indeed, it would cause significant disruption to education. It was different with SMA Negeri 2 Majene. Based on the observation, there was no response from the online class students. Otherwise, they gave an excellent response in the classroom or offline class. Therefore, based on the background described above, it was essential to conduct research under the title "Students' Perception Toward Blended Learning in EFL Classroom During Pandemic at (Majene Regency)."

2. Method

This research type was a mixed method. In this study, the researcher used Quantitative and qualitative, where the data collection was conducted by using questionnaires and interviewing. It was accessible to determine the students' perceptions as a purpose of this research. The subject of this research was the students of SMA Negeri 1 Majene and the students of SMA Negeri 2 Majene, which consisted of three majors, Science, Social Science, and Language. All classes in this school had English subjects.

Then, during the pandemic, the students were divided into two groups in each class. The teachers taught the students by using the projector in face-to-face learning; otherwise, in online learning, What's App and Google Classroom were used as media. The researcher preferred to use a random sampling technique to select the students as a subject. In this case, the researcher randomly took a sample of three students as representatives in each major from all grades. The researcher focused on finding out students' perceptions of these schools.

3. Results

3.1. Findings

The data collected from the questionnaires and interview results has been diffused and taken from respondents. Then, the questionnaire was processed into table form by using Likert Scale. It aimed to explain the collected data. The population of this data were from Majene Regency, the students of SMA Negeri 1 Majene and the students of SMA Negeri 2 Majene. These schools have applied Blended Learning during the pandemic. The questionnaire result can be seen in the following below.

Item 1: I was happy with Blended Learning system.

Based on item 1, it can be seen that 13 students (36%) strongly agree with this item or were so happy with the Blended Learning system that applied in their school, 4 students (11%) chose to agree, 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 9 students (25%) decided to disagree; and only 1 student (3%) chose strongly disagree. This research indicated that almost half of the respondents in these schools chose "strongly agree and agree" or gave a positive perception toward the Blended Learning system in their schools. The others were "undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree" with the Blended Learning system.

Item 2: The teacher explained well during online learning.

Item 2 stated that there were 9 students (25%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 10 students (28%) chose to agree, 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 6 students (17%) chose to disagree, and 2 students (6%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents in these schools chose "strongly agree and agree" or positively perceived teachers' explanations during online learning. Then the others were "undecided and disagree."

Item 3: The teacher explained well during offline learning.

Item 3 stated that there were 10 students (28%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 22 students (61%) chose to agree, 3 students (8%) chose undecided, there are no students (0%) chose to disagree, and only 1 student (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was

indicated that almost all of the respondents in these schools chose "strongly agree and agree" or gave a positive perception of teachers' explanations during offline learning. Then the others were "undecided and strongly disagree."

Item 4: I was excited with EFL classroom during school applied Blended Learning system.

The item 4 showed that there were 10 students (28%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 6 students (17%) chose agree, 14 students (39%) chose undecided, 6 students (17%) chose disagree and there is no student (0%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost half of the respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" or gave a positive perception to EFL classroom during school applied Blended Learning teachers' explanation during offline learning. Otherwise, the others were in "undecided and disagree".

Item 5: I paid attention to English learning.

The item 5 showed that there were 18 students (50%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 13 students (36%) chose agree, 5 students (14%) chose undecided, 6 and there is no students (0%) chose disagree and strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost all of the respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" or gave a positive perception to English Learning. Then others were in "undecided".

Item 6: I feel more interested to English learning method used online.

The item 6 represented that there were 4 students (11%) chose strongly agree toward this item, only 1 students (3%) chose agree, 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 18 students (50%) chose disagree and 4 students (11%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly disagree and disagree" or gave a negative perception to English Learning method used online.

Item 7: I have experienced using the application in the online

Based on the item 7, it can be seen that there were 19 students (53%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 3 students (8%) chose agree, 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 3 students (8%) chose disagree and 2 students (6%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" or gave a positive perception to this statement or they had experienced using the application in the online learning.

Item 8: I am helped with Blended Learning system.

The item 8 represented that there were 13 students (36%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 8 students (22%) chose agree, 8 students (22%) chose undecided, 6 students (17%) chose disagree and only 1 students (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or the students were helped with Blended Learning system.

Item 9: I dislike with Blended Learning system.

The table above indicated that there were 3 students (8%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 15 students (42%) chose agree , 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 2 students (6%) chose disagree and 7 students (19%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item which they were dislike with Blended Learning system. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 10: The teacher's explanation was not interesting during online learning.

The item 10 showed that there were 8 students (22%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 12 students (33%) chose agree, 14 students (39%) chose undecided, only 1 students (3%) chose disagree and 1 students (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they were not interesting with teachers' explanation during online learning. Blended Learning system. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 11: The teacher's explanation was not interesting during offline.

The item 11 stated that there were 7 students (19%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 12 students (33%) chose agree, 5 students (14%) chose undecided, 2 students (6%) chose disagree and 10 students (44%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they were not interesting with teachers' explanation during offline learning. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 12: I was not interesting with EFL Classroom during school applied Blended Learning system.

The item 12 showed that there were only 1 students (3%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 17 students (47%) chose agree , 9 students (25%) chose undecided, only 1 students (3%) chose disagree and 8 students (22%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they were not interesting with EFL classroom during school applied Blended Learning system. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 13: I did not pay attention to English learning during Blended.

Based on the item 13, it could be seen that there were 3 students (8%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 15 students (42%) chose agree, 9 students (25%) chose undecided, 2 students (6%) chose disagree and 7 students (19%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they did not pay attention to English Learning during Blended Learning system applied. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 14: I was not interesting to English learning method explained both online or offline

The item 14 showed that there were 8 students (22%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 12 students (33%) chose agree, 14 students (25%) chose undecided, only 1 student (3%) chose disagree and 1 student (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they were not interesting English learning method both online and offline. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 15: I did not have experience using application in online learning.

The item 15 represented that there were 7 students (19%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 12 students (33%) chose agree, 5 students (14%) chose undecided, 2 student (6%) chose disagree and 10 student (44%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost half respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they did not have experience using application in online learning. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Item 16: I was not helped with Blended Learning system.

The item 16 stated that there were 5 students (14%) chose strongly agree toward this item, 14 students (39%) chose agree, 6 students (17%) chose undecided, only 1 student (3%) chose disagree and 10 student (28%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that more respondents in these school chose "strongly agree and agree" toward this item or they were not helped with Blended Learning system. Then others were in "undecided, disagree and strongly disagree".

Based on the result above, it can be concluded that the students in the Majene Regency had various perceptions of every statement in the questionnaire. Then, they tended to choose "strongly agree and agree" when the school applied offline learning. Otherwise, they preferred to choose "undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree" when the school applied online learning. So they had balance perceptions of the statements. It also could be seen the average from all the tables reached (68.68%), which they were categorized as undecided with the Blended Learning system. Hence, they had undecided perceptions toward Blended Learning during the pandemic at Majene Regency. It was also proven by interview results that the students tended to give a positive perception of offline learning; otherwise, they gave a negative perception of online learning.

3.2. Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted on May 2022 at Majene Regency, which were SMA Negeri 1 Majene and SMA Negeri Majene, it can be seen that various students' perceptions were given through questionnaire and interview process. The researcher gave the questionnaire to the students to find out their perception toward the conducting of Blended Learning in Majene Regency. Based on the result, the students were categorized as undecided toward Blended Learning. The questionnaire result proved it reached a percentage 68.68%, and it was categorized as undecided based on the score category of

the questionnaire in the Likert Scale. Then the questionnaire result was supported by the interview process.

The researcher also interviewed the students to know their statements about Blended Learning system applied during the pandemic in their school. The researcher concluded that the students had positive and negative perceptions toward Blended Learning system or they had undecided perceptions. It is proven by students' perception when the school conducts online and offline learning. Most students had a tendency to give positive perception toward offline or face-to-face learning otherwise they preferred to provide a negative perception of online or remote learning. It was because the students faced some difficulties during online learning, for instance, lack of infrastructure such as smartphones, networks, etc. In contrast, the students found easiness in face-to-face learning. They were able to get feedback from the teacher directly and also from their classmates.

It is almost related to the previous research, "Investigating the Students' Perception Toward Blended Learning Method Implemented in Teaching English," a study that contained two points of view: the strengths and weaknesses of Blended Learning. The researcher concluded that Blended Learning had some advantages which could be obtained when the lecturer implemented the method based on students' perceptions. For instance, students can study independently and share information with others between the teacher and students; thus, the teacher can control the learning activities. Moreover, Blended Learning was easy to implement, cost-efficient, and able to add to the attractiveness of learning. In contrast, Blended Learning had weaknesses depending on facilities and infrastructure availability. It challenged implementing Blended Learning if the facilities and infrastructure needed to support the learning (Sari, 2020).

In addition, the students benefitted from blended learning by using What's App and received feedback from lecturers. For instance, What's App can improve students' vocabulary. In contrast, this research also revealed the students' concern about blended learning. They were weak on learning assignments, limited familiarity with applying ICT learning tools. This paper emphasized several implications of the research findings, including the lecturer's necessity for professional development that allowed them to help students succeed in blended learning (Simbolon, 2021).

In contrast, there was a significant increment in student learning results on information and communication technology subjects after using blended learning. The research revealed that the blended learning model contributed more to students' achievement than the traditional learning model (Utami, 2018). Then, another research revealed that research gave a positive perception toward the implementation of the Blended Learning method in ELT. The positive perception came from the respondents' experience of receiving the Blended Learning method. They indicated they were fun when the lecturer applied the Blended Learning method. In addition, the students benefited from the Blended Learning method, which interested them in learning. They also became more active and responsible for learning (Talis et al., 2018).

It can be concluded that in giving perception, indeed, each individual can be influenced by internal factors and external factors. This is following what was stated by (Gibson et al., 1984b). Internal factor influencing perception is the factors turning up from

each self. Otherwise, external factors influencing perception depend on the environment's characteristics and objects.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that all of the students as respondents in this research had various perceptions toward Blended Learning in EFL Classroom during the pandemic. The researcher concluded that the students in Majene Regency were categorized as "undecided" toward Blended Learning both from the questionnaire and interview results. The questionnaire result proved it reached a percentage 68.68%, and it was categorized as undecided based on the score category of the questionnaire on Likert Scale. Then in the interview result, most students tended to give a positive perception toward offline learning; otherwise, they preferred to give a negative perception of online learning. It was because the students faced some difficulties during follow online learning. In contrast, the students found easiness in face-to-face learning.

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