Online Application in Blended Learning; EFL Students’ Perspective

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Abstract

Pandemic Covid-19 has changed many features over the world, particularly for educational aspect. The significance roles of teachers in pandemic situation is should be able to intensely transform the learning styles that used in the classroom; face to face into blended learning. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is one of alternative ways for teachers in teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) using online application. Thus, this research is aimed to observed the implication of online application in State Islamic University Prof. K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, especially in English major at 2nd and 4th semesters. This research uses descriptive qualitative with a sampling approach which gathered with an online survey followed by in-dept interview. The result present that the most used application in the classroom is Google Meet. Most of students are claimed that Google Meet is helpful for learning activity in many aspects besides the difficulties. Thus, it can be concluded that the students’ perspective on blended learning had a positive impact of the blended learning.

Keywords: Students’ perspective; online application; blended learning.

INTRODUCTION

Pandemic Covid-19 has unexpectedly happened in the end of 2019 and changed many features, especially for educational aspect. It actually impacts the learning process which always been done by face to face method. Significance roles of teachers in this situation is should be able to intensely transform the learning styles that used in the classroom. Consequently, teachers have to change the regular method which usually performed in traditional and should be regenerate within the technological instruments (Tayebnik & Puteh, 2013) called Blended Learning (BL).
Information Communication and Technology (ICT) is the alternative element for teachers to teach English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia. ICT provides the improvement of learning styles used by teachers in extend the materials. In fact, technology is considered to the uncomplicated internet approach which can be accessed in any times and any places (Utami, 2018) along the existence of internet in today’s need. There is prevalent concurrence that the technological modification paved the way for meeting needs (Cakici, 2016). The existence of ICT in English learning, which English is a foreign language in Indonesia, is beneficial. It makes teachers maximize the use of technology in the classroom. For instance, teacher can ask students to learn English through an application (Such as: Elsa Speak, Hello English, etc.) which can have online live interaction with native speakers. So that, technology gives numerous chances for language learning (Hasan & Al-Dera, 2013). It increased as the implication of ICT in the classroom as boost and build a substantial learning environment (Cakici, 2016).

Therefore, demand of teachers’ creativeness in teaching English for EFL students cannot be debated. Knowledge about the applications also the learning styles which should be gain students' interest for the specific course. Unfortunately, not all of the teachers are known well for the application which can be used in the classroom. For instance, teachers can teach with study and playing, as using Quizizz and Kahoot that usually used for examine student’s understanding within playing a game. In order to overcome the needs according to the situation, ICT provides the advancement of technology in covering the difficulties. Yet, due to the BL learning, teachers cannot be assuring students comprehension (Prayuda S, 2021). Implementing technology in teaching cannot be run well as the students are not get attention on teacher, which the media that used is very influence the students.

Early grades students in UIN Saifuddin Zuhri are the object of the research. The researchers have to choose the 2nd and 4th grades are because these semesters have been doing BL since the last semester. In which the researchers were having a lot of hope of this research to have the result of their perspective in using online applications in BL. UIN Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto has a wisdom of consider the learning process by BL in order to minimalize the crowd of students in the University. Furthermore, in applying the BL teachers also take advantage to use ICT, such as using online application as one of the instructional medias used in the learning process in order to reach the students who’s in online section. To conclude, this research aimed to observed how is the perspective of the students in experimenting online applications in EFL Classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Online Applications

Online applications are software accessed using web explorer through a network such as internet or intranet. Utilization of technology and information in the world of education one of which is the process of learning, can be done by using ICT. There are three roles of ICT in the learning process: as educational
media, used to explain the transfer of material in the classroom. As part of the information, online applications also fertilize as a supportive learning system in the COVID-19 pandemic in helping the smoothness of the learning process.

Widely used online applications are Google facilities. There are three Google facility that can be utilized during online learning is Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Quizziz. As the Google Classroom application for example, is an application created by Google which aims to facilitate teachers and learners implement learning. The app helps teachers easily manage learning and convey information in appropriately and accurately to learners (Hakim, 2016).

1. **Google Meet**

   Google Meet is a video conferencing service, which it is the combination of Google Hangouts and Google Chat. This application is very helpful, especially in Blende Learning condition. Moreover, managing the Google Meet application is not difficult and can be followed by many participants (Singh & Soumya, 2020). This application has many advantages that strongly support online learning. For instance, teacher can convey material easily to students. With the Share Screen feature in the Google Meet application, the teacher can share the screen and then display the material in the form of documents, videos, and power point for students. Another example is the application do not really consume a lot of internet quota (Sunardi, 2021). Compared to other platforms, this application is not wasteful of internet data. So that teachers and students don’t have to worry about running out of quota quickly. This online application is expected to be a medium to improve learning outcomes in critical times like today.

2. **Google Classroom**

   Google classroom is a Learning Management System (LMS) which provide by Google for teachers in order to support the learning activity. This application is used for giving a central area to communicate with students and ask some inquire questions. In a progressively advanced world, google classroom makes a different encourage online learning appearance and sense (Sudarsana et. al. 2019). This service is designed to help teachers make and distribute tasks to learners using paperless. Moreover, google classroom could be used in order to support education, especially in learning process. Besides, google classroom can also be accessed to submitting some tasks.

3. **Quizziz**

   Quizziz is a learning platform that provides multiple tools to make a classroom fun, interactive, and engaging for students. This application helps learning activity using Game Based Learning and assessment in the classroom (Irwansyah & Izzati. 2021). This application is usually used to evaluate students understanding, such as reading comprehension, grammar, and any other aspects. Thus, by using Quizziz application, it might build students’ ability in their digital skill.
**Blended Learning**

Blended learning (BL) is a learning method conducted by combining, mixing, and integrating conventional education systems with digitally based educational systems. It improved students’ interest with fun environment. BL has many advantageous, such as build a local and global network, flexible of place and time management (which still connecting the mentors and learners), also saving more money than in regular classroom. Moreover, students can adjust the model of their learning styles, including visual (when people learn by vision), auditory (when people learn by hearing or speaking), read or written (when people learn by displaying things as words), and kinesthetics (when people learn by physical practice). As stated by Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) which cited in Graham and Bonk (2006), there are 6 reason to use BL, including the following: Increased pedagogical aspect, access to knowledge, social interaction, personal agency, cost-effectiveness, and case revision.

**Previous Study**

This research is a development from the past research that already testify the use of ICT in English Learning using some applications. The differences of the previous research can be an advisement for this research, as the results were not always having positive outcome. Below are the results from the past research, as follow:

Setyaningsih (2020) revealed that by the perspective of students, face to face learning caused anxiety once in direct communication in the classroom also problem of the crowd classroom that influence students learning focus. In contrast, the online classroom is more about the technical issue, as affected by the internet connected. Moreover, there is as students claimed that online classroom makes them feel as if they are alone”.

Sujarwo et al. (2020), found that WhatsApp most chosen by students as its application is economical and flexible. Yet, students were claimed that offline learning is better than online learning due to the limited interaction between students and teachers”.

S. Zboun & Farrah (2021), occurred that beside of the advantageous of online learning, students are preferred to choose face to face learning rather than online learning. It is affected by the lack of internet connection, slight of interaction, slight of participations, and less of comprehension for materials given by teachers.

Khairani, Daud, and Mahdum (2020) proved that students received positive impact in using Google Classroom within the reason as Google Classroom increase students’ motivation in learning, giving more efficiency of time management, students feel interested to use Google Classroom, etc.

Warman (2018) on her research result that WhatsApp on Blended Learning is very advantageous by students’ perspective. The logical thought of this result is because the use of WhatsApp in this Blended Learning is fun and can increase
students’ learning motivation, as for instance the assignments and the learning activity which done as the feeling as they have a chat with their classmate.

By several previous research above, it can be concluded that internet connection is the massive problem according to the students’ difficulties. Still, using application in the classroom is the effective way to execute the learning process in Blended Learning. By the problems occurs, it is important to the teachers in order to choose the applications that consider as effective to be implemented in the classroom. So, the teachers can adjust the application followed by the strategy in order to customize students’ troubles in internet connection.

**METHOD**

**Research Design**

This research is a type of qualitative research using descriptive approach. Descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that describe and explain about the condition as it is without any additional information or changing the data. Nassaji (2015) describe that descriptive research is to depict a wonder and its characteristics. For that reason, this research will look for the perspective of students in using online application that used in the classroom in BL situation.

**Participants and Data Collection**

This research was conducted in State Islamic University K.H Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The population of this study is the students in State Islamic University for the 2nd and 4th semesters. Then, the total sampling of this study was 26 students. To collecting the data, the researchers were giving some questions with online survey through Google Form and in-depth interview. The online survey through Google Form was shared to students related that using online application in the classroom. Moreover, the interviews were conducted by 6 students who have an interesting point of view from the result of questionnaire. The data were evaluated by diminishing the data or simplifying the data. The researchers were describing the data in briefly for the students’ perspective in using online application in BL.

**FINDINGS**

**Applications Used in Blended Learning**

Online application is the key of BL method implication which needed for both learners and teachers in order to utilize the use of ICT in learning process. In this study, the researchers found that teachers are using online application wisely and consider into the context needed in classroom activity. Dozens of online applications can be used for educational activity in this era is advantageous for all learners in the world. Therefore, in this study the researchers found that many online applications that have been implemented in the classroom of State Islamic University K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The applications are Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Telegram, Elsa Speak, Google Form, Edulastic, Quizizz, and E-class (exclusive website for students, teachers, and staffs in UIN Saifuddin Zuhri).
From the graph above, it can be analysed that the application that is often used in the classroom in BL is google meet, this is evidenced by 96% of students which 26 students choosing this application as the application that is most often used. While the platform that is rarely used is the Google Form gain that chosen by 40% of students’ choices.

According to interviewees, the application that mentioned are considerably used as for the learning tools. It can be divided into the application used for present the materials and to submitting some tasks. Some students stated that:

“We are not using only one application. It depends of our learning needs”

Google meet and Zoom are the applications that usually used for presenting materials. The two applications can easily make the students and teachers into face to face mode, in despite of only in gadget screen. It can also be used for showing materials or Power Point for presentation session that can help students and teachers to have live interaction on the screen. Furthermore, Elsa Speak is slightly different with Edulastic and Quizizz. Elsa speaks the application in order to train students speaking skill, it makes students practice the speaking aspect more. Than Edulastic and Quizizz are used for accomplish some assessments, in somewhat different, Quizizz is in concept of game. So that the students could done the assignments with an atmosphere of playing a game. In contrast, Google Form is only used for submitting some tasks. Finally, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Telegram are mixed used for learning activity and submitting some tasks. They used chat feature in learning process. Yet for WhatsApp Application can be using other features such as using voice note or some video recording.

**Most Favorable Application in Blended Learning**

Beside of all the applications mentioned above, there is an application that used the most in the classroom as shows in the chart below:
Based on the diagram above, it can be analyzed that the application that is most used by students in grade 2 and 4 of English Education for BL is the Google Meet application, this has been proven by 76% of students choosing this application as the application most often used in BL. Meanwhile, 12% have chosen Telegram as the application most often used in BL and 8% have chosen the Google Classroom application as the application that is more often used in BL. Finally, the Zoom Application is a rare used application that is most used in the classroom because the choice is just 4%.

"We are mostly used Google Meet, because it shows the presentation of the materials from teachers or the students’ presentation. It is easier to use Google Meet for presenting materials actually”

From the statement of students above, the application that used the most in the classroom is Google Meet. Most of interviewees claimed that the use of Google Meet is enjoyable to use. The other interviewees even declare that Google Meet is effective to use in the classroom. The reason is because Google Meet have features which make the communication or interaction between teachers and students goes on at the exact time. Teachers explanation, the visualization of materials that showed in share screen feature, some practices, students’ presentation, and other features are helpful for both students and teachers. In addition, the 2nd and 4th semesters students were not joining the offline learning for a year along the emergence of Covid-19. Therefore, they were not experience the few semesters. So that using google meet can cover up the students need in experiencing the learning process.

The Challenges of the Online Application Used in Blended Learning

In experimenting BL method, both teachers and students must face many challenges along the process. From the perspective of students according to the interviewee, teachers are having many applications for the learning process. Yet, those applications are not always working properly.
“I think blended learning is flexible, but it is depending of application used by the lecture.”

Therefore, teachers’ choice of the application in the classroom is very substantial for students. Because the feeling, enjoyment, and focus of students in the learning process is the most important. For instance, the use of Google Meet, which the most used application according to the students’ choices, is valued as a good application to used yet there are many difficulties on it.

“I like to use Google Meet, because it makes us face to face learning.
But, due to lack of internet connection, I cannot using Google Meet smoothly”

Student’s statement above revealed that Google meet is helpful for learning, yet there are many difficulties for students. Lack of internet connection is the hardest obstacle. According to the interviewees, lack of internet connection while using Google Meet makes the slide of the presentation cannot be showed off, the visual quality is vague, and the voice unclear. Some students mention that they are uncomfortable using (applications) because they do not have sufficient Internet connections at their locations. Most students would not have access to his or her facilities, such as computers and Internet access. Although this BL method still faces a number of challenges, all concerned parties can benefit from it. Is actualized through collaborations to advance education and learning.

**The Impact of Online Application in The Classroom**

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The application makes me increase my English skill?</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The application aids e in understanding the materials better?</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The application makes me have better focused in learning English</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The application gives positive in learning impact for you?</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any differences for your comprehension while using online application? Rather than using conventional method?</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
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</table>

According to the table above, applications used in the classroom is very influence students, for the comprehension, also for the students’ motivation. Students in BL method have many impacts for themselves. As students have their own learning styles, for instance audio, audio-visual, kinesthetics, etc. Each of students must have one of it. So that, it is teacher’s charge in order to know and to adjust students’ learning style.
“Google meet is suitable for me, because I am a visual learner. Because the lectures are usual to show visual in Goggle Meet”

“I am a kinesthetics learners. So, I think Google Meet can cover my learning style for a little”

From the statement of the interviewees above, students actually have difficulties for the comprehension in for the learning process. In addition, there are some interviewees that have some interest to use other application that is not applied in the classroom. Hello English, Elsa Speak, YouTube, and Duolingo are the application for some students that build a higher interest to study English.

DISCUSSION

This research is to analyze the students’ perspective on the Online Application that is used in the classroom. As in the e-learning situation, application is very required cover for the learning process. Related to the finding above, the researchers are found that applications that used in the classroom are Google Meet, Google Form, Google Classroom, Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram, and English Sound. Those application have their own advantageous and disadvantageous (Mu’awanah, et al. 2021).

Technology become growing rapidly as the following of education as needs the simple and effective way in execute learning activity. By the positive outcome of using gadget which is almost kids have and very useful in this era. It is in line with the study from Thornton and Houser (2005) which was stated in Basal, et al (2016), they prove the use of gadget is more effective to use, because it is easier and simpler than computer or printed sources. Moreover, reason of gadget using is more effective is because it can be carried anywhere as long as the location have a stable internet connection. Different when using computer as it has many elements and cannot simply be taken by everywhere we are going to. So, utilize technology by using gadget in learning is an alternative way in order to carry the learning process.

By the use of technology, the election great applications used must followed by teacher knowledge in technology itself. Yet, it is hard for teachers to relate the application chosen into the target of the material. It is in line with the precious research, Cakici (2016) stated that the implementation of applications in the classroom by giving materials through it cannot be that simple, because it is difficult to customize with syllabus and curriculum. In this case the creativity by teacher is very significant. So that, the acquaintance of teacher in order to selecting the one which suitable for the learning process is urgently needed.

According to the finding above, the use of application in the classroom that the teachers usually used to deliver materials is Google Meet. Google meet consider one of application mostly used in the classroom and claimed as an effective tool in order to run the learning activity, especially in BL. Live virtual interaction in using Google Meet build students’ confidence in order to explore their skills as they can do question and answer which directly respond by teacher. It is convenient to the past research by Putra (2021), that establish highly students’ motivation and
students’ participations by increasing 79.4% after testing Cycle I and Cycle II in his observation. Moreover, Google Meet can also increase students speaking skill, as stated by Fakhruddin (2018) students have lots of interest in Google Meet as it is a new experience for them, the high result found by analyzing 5 aspects (grammar, pronunciation, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary) which result about 60s number before using Google Meet and about 80s number after Google Meet implemented in the classroom. it can be concluded that Google Meet is giving positive impact for students eager and stimulating.

Moreover, Google Meet is slightly different with Zoom. The use of Zoom in learning activity can be affecting a good students' learning output (Mu’awanah, et al. 2021). Close range with Zoom, it considered as the application that can be used continually (Khasanah & Syarifah, 2021). Yet, most of teachers in State Islamic University K. H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto used, its considered by the internet quota when using Google Meet is quota friendly (Sunardi, 2021).

Furthermore, Telegram is the second application that mostly used in the classroom according to the students' choices. As the reason that this application is efficient for data saving and the data still can be downloaded when we were deleted it. Telegram also indicated as the application that give positive impact toward students' comprehension, especially in writing performances (Aghajani & Adloo, 2018). Another skill that improved by using telegram in learning activity is vocabulary improvement. The research from Abu-Ayfah (2020) proved that Telegram usage in classroom activity makes a lot of EFL students in Tibah University has improved in vocabulary teaching. Along the features in Telegram and the effectiveness of using the application, telegram is importantly having massive impact as a tool for students in improving skills.

Then, Google Classroom is the third most used application in learning classroom as this application is used long before Pandemic is happened. As in this research, Google classroom usually used mostly for submitting some assignments, yet it is also beneficial to use for share some materials. Google classroom is also proved that its application is effective to use in the classroom as learning activity, meaning as using for delivering materials. Proved by Afandi & Saputri (2020), they found that Google Classroom is effective to increase students’ motivation to explore their ideas and to participate more in the learning activity. Followed by Khairani, Daud, and Mahdum (2020), they concluded that Google Classroom provide optimistic influence to students’ realization. This application also efficient in the form of submitting some tasks, and it is help students in order to manage time management as the deadline set automatically by teacher.

Another application is WhatsApp which the application as well-known as a daily chat platform. WhatsApp is one of social media that students must have in their mobile phone. In using WhatsApp, the interaction between teacher and students is faster, as many features in WhatsApp that make the classroom run easily. Furthermore, using WhatsApp in the learning activity is simple and increased students’ performance outside the classroom (Nuraeni & Nurmalia, 2020). As many distractions in using WhatsApp as a media, this application can be used effectively by maximizing the method and strategy by teacher. Hanisi, Et al
(2018) in the research found that with using WhatsApp in English Learning can improve students to be basic, entertaining, and advantageous. To conclude, even though this application is commonly used for chatting, it can be established students learning improvement when the teachers’ strategy can cover students’ interest in the lesson.

Last but not least, another application that is effective for learning activity is YouTube. Based on the finding above, there is a student that also recommend this application for the learning activity. It is due to the use of YouTube that can be accessed everywhere and anywhere. Video in YouTube can be downloaded and can be watched as we want. This application help students in improving their understanding. Followed by the research by Zulhijah (2020) showed that YouTube can be increased students’ proficiency. Furthermore, according to the past research from Rozal, et al (2021) found that the use of YouTube in Project-Based Learning has given positive output as it results the significant effect on the cognitive domain.

Actually, any applications will be effective to use in learning process as long as the teacher implementing suitable learning strategy in using the application to cover the challenges in the classroom. Yet, no matter how marvelous the strategies are, when the internet connection has some trouble, students cannot follow the learning process as they should. It is the biggest problem of teachers and students in this case. Kaur (2013) in the research explained that there are several challenges of BL, such as technical challenges, organizational challenges, and instructional design challenges. Technical challenges are about the internet connection difficulties and collecting participants in order to join the online classroom. The organizational challenges are about managing stuffs of blended learning, such as the participants, the idea, and the role of facilitator. Another research from Dahmash (2020) which describe the challenges of BL comes from 5 aspects, such as technological problem, instructor’s performance, online test, the attitudes and limited resources, of students, also the university council’s decision. In conclusion, the teachers and students actually have their own difficulties, so that it is their responsibility in order to minimize the challenges.

Any applications that used in the classroom is important to enhance students’ performance by concerning the impact for students. the positive impact for students is the priority than the negative impact can be used as an evaluation. Based on the finding above, some students claimed that some applications impact their learning output as the use of application adjusted to their learning styles. Draffran & Rainger (2006) describes that there are some learning skills of learners, there are Motor Skills, Visual Skills, Auditory Skills, Language Skills, and Learning Skills. All of the learning skills will be affected the students output of the study. it is important for teachers to know the learning styles of students in order to maximize their learning input.

CONCLUSION

According to the research above, despite of the challenges of the learning process that both teachers and students face, it can be concluded that from the
students’ perspective by utilizing blended learning had a positive impact on the performance of EFL students. The research was held by 2nd and 6th semesters of English Education Department in State Islamic University Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. The research is qualitative research which using descriptive approach. Online survey through Google Form which filled by 26 students, then the in-depth interviewees was held by choosing 6 students who have interesting point of view. The students consider that online application to use in blended learning is beneficial in the learning process. As many challenges in the learning process that happened along the learning process may could be an evaluation for the better learning process in the future when having a situation as this time. There are many applications used in the classroom, such as Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Telegram, Elsa Speak, Google Form, Edulastic, Quizizz, and E-class. Beside from the applications that used, according to the students’ perspective, as the students in the University is the first time to do blended learning, Google Meet is helpful for students to cover learning process. Along the applications that implemented, there must be difficulties that of course impactful to the students learning behavior. So that, it is important for teachers to know the difficulties from the students in order to find the effective strategy in reach the learning objectives of each materials.

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