Emerging an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner's Perception

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ABSTRACT

Blended learning method requires online and offline classroom instruction. In English language class particularly for EFL learners in Indonesia, blended learning become one of the best methods which can be implemented by teacher to assist learners. By having blended learning method, learners are able to do discussion with teacher/lecturer and other students beside face-to-face interaction. This study aims at investigating EFL learner's perception about blended learning method in language class. This research was descriptive research. There were 84 learners in university level of English department involved as participants of this study. A questionnaire containing 20 statements about blended learning was used to collect data. The result showed that, EFL learner's perception about blended learning method was in a positive and good respond. Mostly, EFL learners give respond "agree" and "strongly agree" towards the statement available in the questionnaire. Furthermore, blended learning method can also be implemented by using certain application or platform such as: zoom meeting, google meet, microsoft teams, and others in order to emerge an innovation in a language classroom. In conclusion, blended learning method can create effective and efficient learning.

Keywords: blended learning method, English class, EFL learners.

INTRODUCTION

In the teaching and learning process, blended learning method

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

402

necessitates online and offline learning. Blended learning has emerged as one of the most effective methods for assisting students in English language classes, particularly for EFL students in Indonesia. Furthermore, during Corona Virus Deseas-19 (Covid-19) pandemic and also this millennial era, blended learning become the most selected method by teacher and students for learning needs. In addition, learners are able to do discussion with teacher or lecturer and other students beside face-to-face interaction. Therefore, blended learning become famous and popular for online and offline learning.

In some cases, hybrid learning is also known as blended learning. It combines in-person classroom meetings with online learning. There are several blended learning models available, including Flex and Online Driver (Thompson, 2016). The former employs a progressive introduction to an online mode, whereas the latter is a stand-alone virtual class. In some ways, blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face classroom meetings with online learning, is regarded as the most productive type of learning (Lubkov et al., 2020). For beginners, it may provide more opportunities and flexibility to support students' individual learning needs (Thompson, 2016). Furthermore, it can reduce some of the potential risks associated with the use of digital tools in the classroom. For example, due to technical issues, learners may lose sight of the importance of knowledge. Furthermore, using digital tools may cause students to degrade their human nature (Lubkov et al., 2020).

Adding online learning to blended learning English language classes can also benefit students, especially those studying English as a foreign language (EFL). In addition to being able to provide students with a wider range of learning activities, the use of various types of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, which are available on modern mobile phones, can be used to enhance language learning experiences. Language learners may be able to practice the four language skills in online learning with today's smartphones, which include voices and texts (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2015).

Several studies on learners' perceptions of blended learning have been conducted (Alaidarous & Madini, 2016; Annamalai, 2019; Cirak & Yildirim, 2018; Gyamfi, 2015; Gyamfi & Sukseemuang, 2017; Huang, 2016; Ja'ashan, 2015; Wright, 2017). According to some studies, university students view blended learning favorably. Huang (2016) discovered, for example, that more than half of non-English program students in higher education in southern China preferred blended learning over either online or offline learning. His research also looked at how students perceived the roles of both types of learning modes, and they saw both online and offline learning modes as interdependent in

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

403

supporting their learning.

Similar studies were conducted in different contexts by Alaidarous and Madini (2016) in Saudi Arabia, Annamalai (2019) in Malaysia, and Gyamfi (2015) in Africa. The first two studies discovered that students' familiarity with the learning instrument influences their perspectives, while the third study discovered that students' basic computer and internet skills appeared to influence students' positive perceptions of blended learning. To investigate these issues further, Wright (2017) investigated students' preferences for each learning mode at a Malaysian university. According to the findings, fewer than 5% of the 112 students chose a mix of learning modes, 50% preferred face-to-face classroom meetings, and 37.5 percent preferred online lessons. Students stated that they chose face-to-face learning because they could gain a better understanding through this traditional method of learning, which provided direct access to teachers' help and guidance.

Few studies in Indonesia (Rerung, 2018; Rianto, 2020) revealed students' positive attitudes toward blended learning. Rianto (2020) used a questionnaire to solicit student feedback on the use of a university e-learning system in their course. The students stated the e-learning was beneficial to their learning, but it had some technical issues and a slow internet connection. Rerung (2018) investigated the perceptions of 30 students of blended learning in English listening and speaking skills. In her study, the majority of students (21) preferred blended learning, which was similar to Huang's (2016) findings. According to the students, traditional classroom meetings aided their learning in the online learning environment. While her research instrument did not specifically ask why she preferred blended learning, it was assumed that students' reliance on teachers remains high. This assumption was linked to the difficulty level assigned to the technical issues statement in online learning mode (Rerung, 2018). This specific concern of technical issues was one of the key issues examined in the reported study.

However, some studies show that there are difficulties in using digital tools in online learning. First, students' lack of IT knowledge (Holley & Oliver, 2010; Okaz, 2015), other technical issues, and insufficient network stability (Rerung, 2018; Rianto, 2020; Sari & Wahyudin, 2019; Yamin 2020) are barriers to successful learning. Furthermore, students may have few opportunities to practice their spoken communication skills. The majority of mobile learning, it is argued, used a transmission approach in which mobile devices appear to deliver content rather than improve learners' communication skills (Burston, 2014). Another challenge of implementing the online learning mode is keeping students engaged in their learning.

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

404

Referring to the previous statements and explanations, the researchers interested to conduct further study about EFL learners' perception about blended learning method in post pandemic era. From these perceptions, it is expected that the innovation for language teaching will be emerged. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to investigate EFL learners' perceptions of blended learning method in an English language class. The research question formulated for this study is: how is EFL learners' perceptions of blended learning method in an English language class?. The answer of this question can clearly be seen at findings and also conclusion of this research.

METHOD

This was a descriptive study. In this study, there were 84 university students majoring in English involved as participants of this research. A questionnaire with 20 statements about blended learning was used to collect data. The questionnaire was actually an online questionnaire created by using google form application. The researchers then created a link for this questionnaire and shared the link to the WhatsApp number of every single participants. After that, the participant clicked the link and tried to fulfill the online questionnaire. At last, the researchers looked at the progress of participants' responds to the questionnaire from google drive application. The participants' responds to the questionnaire were automatically counted and analyzed using google drive application. It can also be seen the percentage and diagram of participants' responds toward the statements stated in the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study can be presented based on the results of the distributed questionnaire. Based on the questionnaire results, students responded in a variety of ways. Some students responded to the questionnaire statements with "strongly agree (*sangat setuju*), agree (*setuju*), neutral (*netral*), disagree (*tidak setuju*), and strongly disagree (*sangat tidak setuju*)." The learners' responses were related to their perceptions of language learning through the blended learning method. Furthermore, the questionnaire results can be presented in the Table 1.

Table 1:

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

Recapitulation and Percentage of EFL Learner's Responses

Statement	Responses (%)					Total of learners				
	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	13.1	48.8	34.5	3.6	-	11	41	29	3	-
2	16.7	52.4	25	4.8	1.2	14	44	21	4	1
3	14.3	45.2	33.3	6	1.2	12	38	28	5	1
4	26.2	38.1	28.6	6	1.2	22	32	24	5	1
5	10.7	45.2	35.7	7.1	1.2	9	38	30	6	1
6	13.1	45.2	33.3	6	2.4	11	38	28	5	2
7	16.7	48.8	26.2	7.1	1.2	14	41	22	6	1
8	10.7	51.2	32.1	3.6	2.4	9	43	27	3	2
9	13.1	46.4	31	3.6	6	11	39	26	3	5
10	14.3	50	31	1.2	3.6	12	42	26	1	3
11	13.1	52.4	28.6	3.6	2.4	11	44	24	3	2
12	16.7	39.3	36.9	6	1.2	14	33	31	5	1
13	11.9	45.2	34.5	4.8	3.6	10	38	29	4	3
14	14.3	48.8	26.2	8.3	2.4	12	41	22	7	2
15	15.5	41.7	33.3	7.1	2.4	13	35	28	6	2
16	11.9	45.2	36.9	2.4	3.6	10	38	31	2	3
17	9.5	42.9	38.1	3.6	6	8	36	32	3	5
18	23.8	32.1	36.9	6	1.2	20	27	31	5	1
19	14.3	52.4	26.2	7.1	-	12	44	22	6	-

**Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL
Learner' Perception**
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

406

20	20.2	46.4	29.8	2.4	1.2	17	39	25	2	1
Average	15	45.8	32	5	2.4	12.6	38.5	26.8	4.2	2
Max	26.2	52.4	38	8.3	6	22	44	32	7	5
Min	9.5	32.1	25	1.2	1.2	8	27	21	1	1

Notes:

SA   : Strongly Agree
A   : Agree
N   : Neutral
D   : Disagree
SD   : Strongly Disagree
Average   : *Nilai rata-rata*
Max   : *Nilai/angka terbesar*
Min   : *Nilai/angka terkecil*

Based on the Table 1, it can be seen that on the percentage of average, the response "strongly agree" was 15%. Furthermore, the average of response "agree" was 45.8%, "neutral" was 32%, disagree was 5%, and strongly disagree was 2.4%. In line with the average percentage, the highest percentage of "strongly agree" responses was 26.2%. Moreover, the biggest percentage for "agree" response was 52.4%, "neutral" was 38%, disagree was 8.3%, and strongly disagree was 6%. In addition to the percentage of the largest number, the percentage of the smallest number of each response can be seen. The lowest percentage was for the response "strongly agree, 9.5%. Furthermore, the smallest percentage for "agree" response was 32.1%, "neutral" was 25%, disagree was 1.2%, and strongly disagree was 1.2%.

Based on the percentages described above, the number of learners who choose the most and fewest available responses in the questionnaire can be seen. For the "strongly agree" response, the highest number who chose this response were 22 people and the minimum number was 8 people. Furthermore, for the "agree" response, the highest number who chose this response was 44 people, and the minimum number was 27 people. This means that more than half (50%) of the class chose this "agree" response. Next, for the "neutral" response, the highest number who chose this response was 32 people, and the minimum number was 21 people. For the "disagree" response, the highest number of people who

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL
Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

chose this response was 7 people, and the minimum number was only 1 person. At last, for the "strongly disagree" response, the highest number who chose this response were 5 people and the minimum number was 1 person.

Based on the explanation of the questionnaire's results, the results of this questionnaire can also be presented in the form of a diagram to make it appear simpler and more appealing. Furthermore, three diagrams that present data about the average percentage, the highest score or percentage, and the lowest percentage can be presented. Furthermore, these three diagrams are shown below.
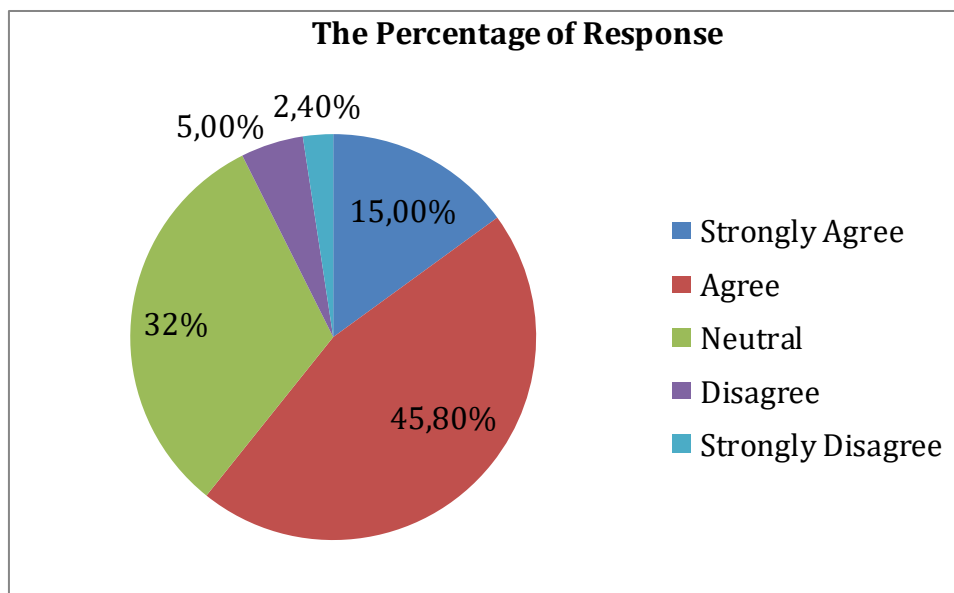
Diagram 1:
The Average of Percentage

The Percentage of Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Diagram 2:
The Highest Percentage

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL
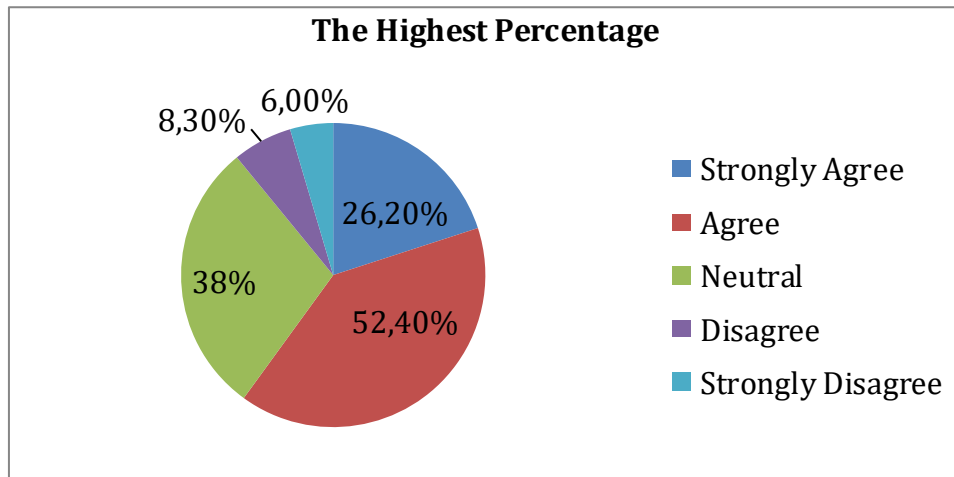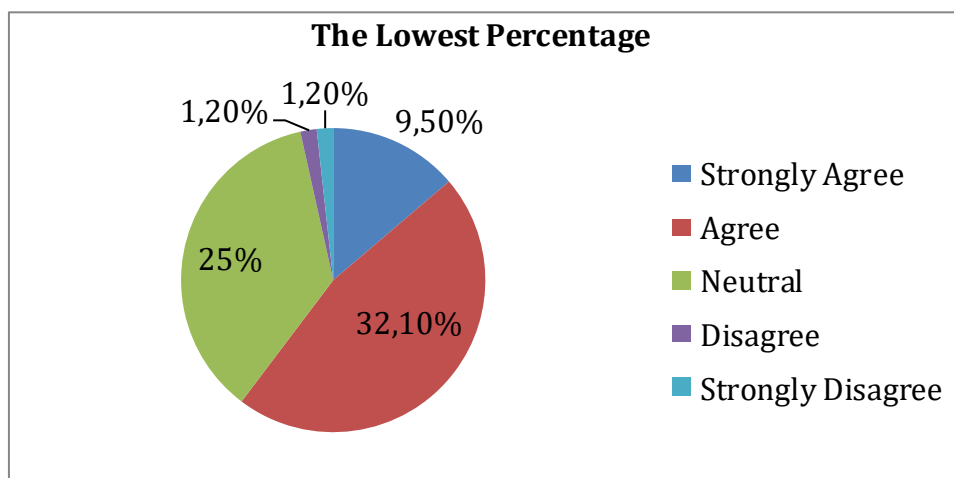Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

The Highest Percentage

Strongly Agree — 26,20%
Agree — 52,40%
Neutral — 38%
Disagree — 8,30%
Strongly Disagree — 6,00%

Diagram 3:
The Lowest Percentage

The Lowest Percentage

Strongly Agree — 9,50%
Agree — 32,10%
Neutral — 25%
Disagree — 1,20%
Strongly Disagree — 1,20%

Based on the three diagrams that have been presented previously, it can be seen that the average percentage of learners' responses to the questionnaire was 15% who selected "strongly agree", 45.8% stated "agree", 32% stated "neutral", 5% stated "disagree", and 2.4% stated "strongly disagree". Furthermore, for the highest percentage, 26.2% stated "strongly agree", 52.4% stated "agree", 38% stated "neutral", 8.3% stated "disagree", and 6% stated "strongly disagree". Moreover, for the lowest percentage, 9.5% stated "strongly agree", 32.1% stated "agree", 25%

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

stated "neutral", 1.2% stated "disagree", and 1.2% stated "strongly disagree". From the presentation of this data, it can be stated that learners are more likely to choose responses "agree" and "strongly agree" than other responses. This indicates that the EFL learners' perception toward the use of blended learning method in class is in a good and positive response. Moreover, based on this response, the innovation for language teaching can be emerged. Teacher or lecturer who wants to teach using blended learning method can use several applications or platform such as: zoom meeting, google meet, microsoft teams, and others in order to emerge an innovation in a language classroom.

In relation to the previously presented findings, it can be discussed and stated that an innovation for language teaching has become a must for a teacher or lecturer. This innovation sometimes can be obtained from learners' perception. Furthermore, this research is in line with previous research result done by (Alaidarous & Madini, 2016; Annamalai, 2019; Cirak & Yildirim, 2018; Gyamfi, 2015; Gyamfi & Sukseemuang, 2017; Huang, 2016; Ja'ashan, 2015; Wright, 2017) about learners' perception toward blended learning method in a classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it is possible to conclude that EFL learners' perceptions of blended learning in a language classroom vary. This is evidenced by the wide range of responses selected by these students in the questionnaires that were distributed. Furthermore, EFL learners have high expectations for using appropriate technology (applications or learning platforms) in the learning process. This is done in order for an innovation to emerge in a language classroom.

Based on the conclusions presented previously, the following recommendations can be made.

a. EFL learners are advised to maximize the outcomes of their perceptions of the blended learning method during the learning process.
b. Teachers or lecturers are encouraged to innovate in the teaching process based on EFL learners' perceptions of the blended learning method.
c. Future researchers are encouraged to identify new gaps in this research that can be filled with different methods or designs, such as experimental research, classroom action research, research and development, or other types of research.

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

410

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Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

411

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Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif

412

Emerging in an Innovation through Blended Learning Method in Post Pandemic Era: EFL Learner' Perception
M. Fadhly Farhy Abbas & Hermawati Syarif