

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARD BLENDED LEARNING THROUGH INSTAGRAM IN ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS CLASS

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Abstract

Addressing the needs of the millennial students brings the implementation of blended learning using social network site in the teaching and learning process. Instagram becomes one of the most popular social network sites in Indonesia. It has been a potential teaching platform to help English teachers to facilitate language learning, especially for learners at the tertiary level. This paper is intended to explore the students' perceptions toward English language learning and the implementation of Instagram in their English for Business class. Students' attitudes toward English course should be investigated to form a basis for this further study. The subjects were 116 undergraduate students who took general English for Business course at the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, University of Teknokrat Indonesia. They were classified into three groups. The data gained were from observation, questionnaire, and interview. The data, then, were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results indicated that most students showed high positive perceptions in using Instagram in their learning since social network Instagram influenced their motivation, engagement, and attitudes. In addition, internet connection and its speed, misunderstanding, and miscommunication toward the materials and task instructions were considered as the problems that hamper their learning. Instagram might help the students to learn English Language. Thus, it is suggested to improve the teaching of technology skills by preparing suitable digital literacy in academic content.

Keywords: blended learning; English for Business; social network site Instagram; students' perception..

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language teachers, nowadays, have often encountered mixed-ability students in large class in which some of students are not engaged actively in the language learning process (Al-Badwawi, 2011). It brings numerous problems that hamper the active interaction among teacher and other students. Therefore, the process of teaching and learning needs appropriate teaching media, teacher, learner aptitude, environment or educational setting, sources, and innovative and interesting instructional techniques to

provide the students flexible time (Miarso, 2009 & Ellis, 2008).

The advance of technology has become valuable part of language learning at all education levels. It has enhanced quality of education field. It has led us to new learning experiences (Blotch, 2008). The teacher and students no longer use their computer and laptop in abundance since many of them have a mobile phone or tablet in their hands that is capable of doing language learning (Motteram, 2013).

It supports learners to learn language and acquire knowledge. The alternative

teaching process is to implement blended learning which emphasizes on online learning and face-to-face learning process (Watson, 2008). The implementation of blended learning increases significantly. This learning is to expand and enrich educational opportunities by characterizing with a structured learning environment and time such as forum/online discussion and/or email. Bringing blended learning environment in the teaching-learning process creates and enriches real-life learning experiences and connections more exciting for students, especially for millennial students. It is also assumed as a beneficial learning tool to promote students' independence and their autonomous learning.

In the last decade, social networking sites grows rapidly and become popular. The widespread of social networking sites can be optimized as the modern teaching media to engage students in social interaction (Mansor & Rahim, 2017). Its usage is not only for personal contact, but also for education purposes (Lane & Coleman, 2011) and can be implemented meaningfully to develop in many language skills. One prominent social networking is Instagram. It is assumed beneficial as an effective educational experience for language classroom since it may create a meaningful learning environment and student's experience. Through Instagram, the teacher and students can do photo-sharing and video-sharing. Besides, they can write and read a caption in photos description, put specific hashtag in their posts, comment, and send direct message on the Instagram. With the possession of smartphone, it potentially makes Instagram accessible to students at all time.

To support learning environment using Instagram, the roles of teacher and students should be clearly defined and comprehended. It allows teachers to adjust their role a continuum from an informal facilitator to the traditional formal as a guide, facilitator, and group process manager (Brown, 2000; Ibrahim, Haniem,

Nambiar, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Rido, Ibrahim, Nambiar, 2016). The teachers have to provide appropriate guidance and feedback to successfully use online communities. Meanwhile, the students have to play a role as active participant and successful communicator (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). They engage in self-authorship by generating materials which function as the fundamental for learning. These ways help to increase students' interest and allow them to be a more active in their own learning process (McBride, 2009).

Studies on social media in EFL classroom have been widely conducted. The previous studies on using social networking show influential results as an effective instructional media (Wahyudin, 2018) and a language learning tool outside classroom (Liliia & Gulnara, 2016; Low & Warawudhi, 2016; Sangsawang, 2011; Suthiwartnarueput & Wasanasomsithi, 2012) to improve undergraduate students' critical thinking and encourage the interaction between teachers and students. Kelly (2015) explored a study on Instagram utility to develop learners' writing skill and find out their attitude towards Instagram. He revealed that Instagram is an effective learning tool for improving learners' writing skill focusing on the vocabulary range and grammatical accuracy. In addition, the learners showed positive attitudes. Further, the studies on using Instagram reveal that it helps the learning process in enhancing the subjects learning whereby interaction and communication take place in the form of expressing ideas and feelings in their captions in Instagram (Bell, 2013; Lunden, 2014; Salomon, 2013).

Considering the useful positive impacts of the social network sites Instagram as teaching media for doing blended learning, this study investigated the perceptions of undergraduate students toward blended learning using Instagram in English for Business course. This study was conducted as a guideline for developing

classroom instruction and using appropriate technology to students' needs and characteristics.

This study was conducted at University of Teknokrat Indonesia in the academic year of 2017/2018. The subjects of this research were 116 Engineering students who took English for Business course. They were divided into three group. The first group was 34 students. The second group and the third group were 41 students. The data gained were from questionnaire, interview, and observation.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections, the students' attitudes toward English for Business class and the students' perceptions toward blended learning through Instagram. In students' attitudes toward English for Business class, there were nine statements to be chosen by students. Meanwhile, the statements for students' perceptions toward blended learning through Instagram were fifteen items. After that, the questionnaire data were analyzed quantitatively by using mean score and standard deviation (SD). The questionnaire itself was interpreted through the level of strongly disagree (1.00-1.80), disagree (1.81-2.60), neutral/moderate (2.61-3.40), agree (3.41-4.20), dan strongly agree (4.21-5.00).

An open-ended interview was done by interviewing 84 students. The questions

The present study aims at exploring the students' attitudes toward English course and their perceptions to the implementation of blended learning through social network Instagram. The

METHODOLOGY

asked were about the activity of blended learning through Instagram and their experiences during applying it in their language learning process. The interview data were analyzed qualitatively by using content analysis. In addition, non-participant observation was simply used to observe some aspects by giving a checklist in the observation sheet.

The students' responses were analyzed to evaluate whether they were positive or negative attitudes and perceptions toward Instagram in English for Business classes. By using Instagram, the students with their own pairs were asked to upload their video in their Instagram, then, mention to official Instagram account created by the lecturer. The materials were telephoning in office and customer service. The lecturer played a role as an observer and a facilitator. The students were given time to interact by giving comments on all videos of performances done by the other pairs. Then, the lecturer asked questions around their experience interacting in Instagram.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

means and standard deviations for students' responses to each item of the questionnaire relating to their attitudes toward English for Business course are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Students' Attitudes toward English for Business Course

Statements	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
	<i>n</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
S1: "Learning English helps develop my skills to living global community."	34	4.32	0.47	41	4.85	0.36	41	4.51	0.51
S2: "Learning English helps increase my self-confidence."	34	3.91	0.57	41	4.24	0.54	41	4.00	0.55

S3: "Learning English does not help improve my language skills."	34	2.41	0.61	41	2.59	1.12	41	2.39	0.67
S4: "When I have to speak English, I always lose my self-confidence."	34	2.62	0.65	41	2.93	0.96	41	2.49	0.60
S5: "English is very difficult subject."	34	3.03	0.87	41	2.83	0.67	41	2.85	0.82
S6: "I do not like studying English."	34	2.26	0.71	41	2.27	0.81	41	2.22	0.72
S7: "Learning English helps create my creative ability."	34	3.88	0.48	41	4.02	0.82	41	3.95	0.67
S8: "Knowledge of English offers a high opportunity to get good jobs."	34	4.18	0.67	41	4.54	0.60	41	4.24	0.66
S9: "I am very happy to study English."	34	3.44	0.61	41	4.17	0.63	41	3.71	0.72

The results from all groups show the positive attitudes toward the English for Business course. The means of all statements were at different levels. The result on the group 1 revealed that the highest mean was S1 (4.32) and S6 was the lowest mean (2.26). In the group 2, the highest mean was S1 with 4.85 and the lowest mean was S6 with 2.27. In addition, the result on group 3 showed that the mean of S1 was the highest mean (4.51) and S6 was the lowest mean (2.22). Interestingly, the highest means and the lowest means of three groups were from the same statements (S1 and S6). The S1 was indicated as the highest level (strongly agree). Meanwhile, the S6 was indicated as the lowest level (disagree).

From interview, it is found that most students from three group like learning English. It is to strengthen the means result of S1. The students realized that learning English language is important for their future. They liked learning English since it might help them to face working world in the era of ASEAN Economic Community. The following extracts describe their opinions about the importances of English.

St 4 "Yes, I love it, because it helps me to prepare my self

before I get in working world in this modern era."

St 6 "I like English. I think I live in modern era where most jobs need someone who can speak foreign language like English."

St 9 "Of course, I like it because when I can speak English, it help me to get a job..."

St 18 "I like it because English is International language and requirement to get job in internasional company."

St 30 "..... we are in Economic Global era and we can work in other country. If we can't speak English, how we can interact with foreigners."

St 62 "I like English because it is used to communicate with friends from other country. When we work and have business there, we need this skill."

St 72 "Yes, it is. This makes me easy to prepare working and compete with other in the job."

St 77 “... this subject helps me to enrich my English knowledge, especially for the needs of working, business, and other fields.”

Subsequently, some students stated that there were improvement for their English skills in learning English such as academic vocabulary, speaking ability, pronunciation, and grammar. The extracts from some students showed their improvement after learning English.

St 2 “Of course vocabulary. Because my lecturer always uses English. So, indirectly I translate it with my dictionary when I get new vocabulary and don't know the meaning.”

St 4 “Yes, there is improvement. After learning English, I understand the meaning of words and how to speak because my lecturer often ask me to speak or answer the questions orally.”

St 6 “Improve my skill so much. Because during learning in the class we must know how to pronoun the word and how to speaking well in our presentation activity...”

St 16 “My English skill increases after joining this course because my lecturer and some friends use English in the process of learning. If I don't know the meaning, I will search the meaning in Google Translate or mobile dictionary. So, indirectly I get new vocabulary, right.”

St 25 “During learning English I feel that I speak English fluently and confidently.”

St 38 “In the beginning, I cant speak well when there is telephoning practice using English, my speaking starts good enough even I misspelled and not fluent...”

St 41 “I think there is improvement in my grammar and understand the terms of business used and of course how to pronounce the words...”

St 62 “Yes, my speaking English ability get better after learning this subject because through business presentation practice and assignment given from my lecturer, I can train my speaking and use good vocabulary which I use as presentation material.”

St 70 “My speaking skill improves because I get many new things during learning process including new vocabulary.”

Moreover, the students' responses to each item of the questionnaire relating to their perceptions towards blended learning through Instagram also shows positive perceptions that most students in three groups agreed on using Instagram for blended learning. They had the same reasons that it was convenient and easy accessed. The table 2 reports the means and standard deviations from all groups.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions toward Blended Learning Using Instagram

Statements	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
	n	mean	SD	n	mean	SD	n	mean	SD
S1: “Blended learning using Instagram is interesting.”	34	3.56	0.56	41	3.66	0.76	41	3.78	0.57

S2: "I really like learning activity using this method."	34	3.41	0.56	41	3.10	0.89	41	3.46	0.71
S3: "This learning method helps me to improve my English skills at present and in the future."	34	3.62	0.99	41	3.46	0.84	41	3.73	0.87
S4: "This learning method helps me to develop teamwork skills."	34	3.53	0.83	41	3.51	0.84	41	3.68	0.76
S5: "This learning method provides an opportunity to improve democracy thinking skills by listening to my colleagues' opinions and accepting the different points."	34	3.65	0.77	41	3.78	0.76	41	3.90	0.74
S6: "This learning method helps to improve my creative thinking skills."	34	3.53	0.86	41	3.73	0.78	41	3.83	0.80
S7: "Learning English for Business with the blended learning using Instagram makes me happy and fun."	34	3.50	0.75	41	3.20	0.84	41	3.59	0.87
S8: "This learning method makes me feel bored and I do not want to study with this method."	34	2.56	0.82	41	2.73	0.81	41	2.73	0.81
S9: "I do not like working group because our group have different ability and ideas."	34	2.38	0.99	41	2.54	0.64	41	2.20	0.84
S10: "There is no English skills improvement after using this activity."	34	2.15	0.86	41	2.46	0.67	41	2.05	0.77
S11: "If I have a chance to study English course deeper, I really want to have a blended learning using Instagram."	34	3.47	0.90	41	3.17	0.80	41	3.44	0.92
S12: "This learning method is time-wasting and time-consuming."	34	2.79	0.84	41	3.00	0.81	41	2.95	0.77
S13: "This learning method helps to create opportunity for communication. Whenever I make mistakes, I will revise them to be a perfect assignment/practice."	34	3.68	0.53	41	3.49	0.87	41	3.61	0.70

S14: "This learning method makes me feel confident and relaxing."	34	3.41	0.56	41	3.66	0.73	41	3.63	0.66
S15: "This learning method makes me stress and exciting. I am somewhat shy when I am being part of the activity."	34	2.47	0.93	41	2.90	1	41	2.76	1.04

It can be seen that the majority of the students agreed that Instagram could be as a language learning tool. The study on the group 1 reveals that the mean of S13 was the highest mean (3.68) and S10 was the lowest mean (2.15). In the group 2, the highest mean was S5 with 3.78 and the lowest mean was S10 with 2.46. In addition, the result on group 3 showed that the mean of S5 was the highest mean (3.90) and S10 was the lowest mean (2.05). Interestingly, the highest means from group 1, S13, was different from group 2 and group 3, S5. On the other side, the lowest means of three groups were from the same statement (S10).

Furthermore, the finding reveals that the students achieve some educational benefits from the technology as learning becomes more relaxed, spontaneous, comfortable in a dynamic (Blair & Serafini, 2014). From the students' interview, most students revealed that they liked blended learning using Instagram since it gave them some positive advantages and effects in their learning process. The following extracts described their opinions towards the effects of implementing Instagram.

St 3 "The benefit is that it can be accessed everywhere."

St 4 "Easy to submit task or project and learn the material from the Instagram posts and I can do it anywhere, not in the class."

St 13 "I really like it because I get motivation and positive result from shy student become brave student in discussion time. And then, it helps me to be active in giving suggestions."

St 16 "Yes, I like. Because it is fun and easy to study anytime and anywhere."

St 29 "I like it. I can study using my media social and I can be easy to access it. I also can find much information...."

St 62 "Yes, I like this learning activity because it is practical and easy to be used. I also can do this anywhere and we must submit our assignment or project via Instagram."

St 66 "Yes, I like because it makes easy for our learning process."

St 71 "Like my other friends. I also like it because make students more independent and creative in doing assignment."

St 74 "This learning style creates positive and negative effects. For negative, the students need adaptation to understand the material given. For positive, this learning can be done anywhere and anytime."

St 83 "Yes of course I like because this activity is very positive and motivate me to study independently."

Certain issues appear in the students' workplace like network stability and internet availability. Beside, the students also mentioned some learning problems. They felt uneasy to ask directly to the

lecturer about their misunderstanding from teaching materials given. They also revealed that they needed a commitment for themselves to use their time to attend online learning. The students' interview extract represented their difficulties during learning in Instagram.

St 3 *"I got difficult when I want to ask about material which I don't understand. It will be easy if asking directly in the class."*

St 4 *"When the connection is unstable, I always fail to play the video and upload the picture in Instagram."*

St 5 *"My difficulty come when I can't understand the material and can't ask it to my lecturer directly. My other difficulty is when there is no internet connection, I can't access it."*

St 7 *"This learning wasted high quota and some students don't have Instagram account in the beginning, but they create it for the sake of joining this blended learning."*

St 14 *"often buffering."*

St 23 *"Not stable for internet connection."*

St 26 *"Lack of face-to-face communication between teacher and students."*

St 30 *"We must have time commitment because we study independently."*

St 42 *"I find problems in connection and time management."*

St 54 *"..... depending on internet connection speed and network stability which sometime disturb my study time."*

St 57 *"Here we are pushed to be independent and have good self commitment."*

St 62 *"My difficulty is that I must understand the material given by reading it first, then I can do the assignment which is given by my lecturer in form of video or performance with partner."*

St 71 *"Sometimes difficult for me to understand the point for assignment or available material, because my lecturer did not explain it directly."*

St 73 *".....when my team want to upload the video but in fact it is fail, maybe it is because internet connection and its speed."*

St 79 *"When we want to submit our video/project, it is not uploaded because of slow connection."*

St 83 *"..... internet access."*

From the observation, it has seen the positive impacts in the students' level of confidence and participation. Implementing blended learning through Instagram has succeeded in promoting students' interest to learn language by participating and communicating in the task given. In Instagram, the students posted their videos and pictures to accomplish their learning task. They gave a like in each post. In some Instagram posts, they actively commented and asked the questions. When doing face-to-face learning in the beginning, most students from each group were rather unwilling to deliver their ideas and speak up. After, they attended learning activities through Instagram, they had succeeded to withhold their silence. The activities on Instagram might improve their communication strategies in which they were freely shared ideas with other friends.

Hence, the results indicates that the implementation of blended learning using Instagram may give more positive perceptions. These study might support the

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it is clearly seen that Instagram might be one of the alternatives to support the practice of teaching language at the tertiary level. It is also assumed as an effective pedagogical tool of learning EFL for sake of the success of online educational environment. The utility of Instagram is assumed as a useful media that may facilitate non-classroom learning and to leverage engagement. In addition, learning activities through Instagram account were perceived in a

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several studies conducted by Lane & Coleman (2011), Mansor & Rahim (2017), and Ayuni, Al-Amin, & Shaidatul (2017).

positive perceptions from the students. They thought that these activities were enjoyable and easy to be accessed anytime and anywhere. From these findings, there should be a deeper and further study on students' majors that might affect their study in EFL classroom. Thus, Instagram might be the need for English teachers to be applied in education to encourage the students' interaction, motivation, and attitudes for learning English.

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