



The Optimization of Blended Learning in Extensive and Intensive Reading Course

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe 1) the application of Blended Learning to extensive and intensive reading subjects, and 2) the student perception of the optimization of blended learning. The subject of this study was the students of the Department of English Education at the Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang. The data in this analysis were the behaviors of students and lecturers in the teaching and learning process and the students' understanding of the learning process in the classroom. The findings showed that (1) students and lecturers were regularly involved in live learning and online interaction, and (2) students had a good view of learning.

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Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has given influence in the world of education in Indonesia, especially in the learning process. One indication of this phenomenon is a shift in the learning process where interaction between educators and students is not only done through live relationships but also done

with communication media such as computers, the internet, and so on. The learning model that is increasingly prevalent today is blended learning, a learning model that incorporates live learning in the classroom with online learning.

Blended learning is a learning approach that incorporates the attributes of living learning and e-

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learning. In live learning, students can meet directly with educators (Ismail et al., 2020). Therefore, social interaction can still occur in the classroom where students do indeed need guidance in learning (Akkoyunlu and Soylu, 2019:45). Students can interact with educators and their friends so that students will directly get feedback from the learning outcomes. Meanwhile, online learning offers to learn all the time where learning can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Akkoyunlu and Soylu, 2020: 183). Hameed et al (2019: 3) also added that material in online learning can be accessed as often as possible if something is forgotten.

The implementation of the blended learning model in the learning process is therefore significant in terms of its benefits. The study of the implementation of blended learning performed by Rovai and Jordan (2019:9) proved to be effective in demonstrating that learning with blended learning creates a greater sense of togetherness than learning that uses only conventional models or only e-learning models. In addition, a study of the effects of learning using the blended learning model was also carried out by Sjukur (2020: 368). This research indicates that the introduction of blended learning improves the engagement and learning outcomes of the students.

Because of the effectiveness of learning using the blended learning model, the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang try to implement this learning model during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lecturer of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang,

especially lecturers who teach extensive and intensive reading courses must use this blended learning model to deliver lectures by combining face-à-face and online methods with the hope that professional teachers will produce English.

This is the role of lecturers to provide effective and efficient learning to render qualified teachers for students in the Department of English Education at the Muhammadiyah Enrekang University. This is not merely for students to pass examinations or for study purposes, because they are prospective teachers whose one of their future assignments that is to make their students competent in four English language skills. Therefore, four language skills should be used in the learning process using the blended learning model: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among four English language skills, reading skill gets more attention for English Education Department in Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang because reading skill in English education department is the most difficult skills to learn (Cabrera & Bazo, 2019: 38-56).

Based on this phenomenon, an extensive, intensive lecture in order to enhance reading knowledge is added to the English Department of Muhammadiyah University Enrekang. Students receive several additional credits for extensive and intensive reading courses. By using the blended learning model, they must actively explore material that is transferred electronically by lecturers or through the internet or software applications. Nevertheless, no empirical research has been given to illustrate how mixed learning can be applied in learning and

how students interpret the application of Mixed Learning in comprehensive and intense lecture courses. This research aims, therefore, to explain (1) the application of blended learning in extensive and intensive reading courses; (2) the student's perceptions of how this learning model is to be applied.

Review of Related Literature

Blended Learning

As language educators, we must always use variations in teaching to enrich the learning environment for students. Blended learning as a model for learning which combines learning and e-learning from face to face, is one of the learning models that can facilitate the delivery of subject matter from educators to their students.

Brew (2019: 98) claims blended learning is an online and face-to-face learning method for a more effective learning experience. Through blended learning, teachers may use online learning tools to help their students become more involved and effective learners in face-to-face learning. Badawi, Brew (2018: 15) defines blended learning, in line with as a "flexible" approach that combines face-to-face learning and online study to share feedback and responses together, as well as individuals in four specific fields, namely learner feedback, learning strategies and alternate evaluation, both directly and indirectly (Ismail & Tini 2020). In other words, blended learning is a method that incorporates online self-study and face to face learning through the use of media and technology to make students more enjoyable and successful.

This learning model makes a positive contribution to learning if blended learning is well implemented. The saving of time is one of them. As McCarthy and Murphy (2018: 67) showed, students would be able to complete the learning activities in a short period by introducing a blended learning model. More thoroughly, Marsh (2019:4) describes multiple advantages of blended learning: to provide an individual learning experience, to provide improved guidance, to encourage and facilitate independent and collaborative learning, to increase the participation of students in learning, to adapt various types of learning, to provide a place for target language activities outside schools, and to minimize the number of learners. Owing to the benefits of blended learning, educators must use blended learning to increase the skills of students.

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading includes learners reading professional contexts and books, as well as developing general reading skills. A second-language approach to comprehension (Brenda, 2018: 79-100). If students read extensively, they read very simple, enjoyable, and fast reading books. This may also be said by the teachers, who read the vocabulary, the grammar and phrases instead of analyzing technical backgrounds and books (Beatrice, 2019: 37-45).

In other words, comprehensive reading involves learners reading long professional contexts or books and large volumes of texts intended to benefit from the general understanding (Elaine, 2018: 77-98). It means that students can choose their subject matter which they

feel they want to explore. In this case, students must also find sponsored articles on the subject, so that they can read more about the subject they have chosen.

Students are expected to have the ability to read the advanced form of finding the principal thought (Elihami & Ismail, 2017), location-specific information, the meaning of words or phrases in context, and to answer written questions in a variety of professional contexts types include. The program involved the kinds of professional contexts which can be illustrated the ability to read orally and in writing (Pejovic, 2019: 35-50).

An extensive reading course has four specific characteristics, and all of the characteristics of an extensive reading course namely: 1). The level of complexity of reading materials helps students to grasp what they are reading with little to no support, 2). Large volumes of read materials are read by readers, 3). Of what they read students always have a choice and 3). They may do activities after the students finish a book or other task, but these activities are intended to encourage learning and enjoyment and further reading. Careful steps are taken to avoid actions which could discourage readings (Mosbaic, 2018: 34-70).

There are some techniques to learn/study extensive reading activity which must be known and done by the students. Several strategies to prepare and practice thorough reading: preview, focus on the problems facing your principles and values, outline, summarize and assess an claim (Pejovic, 2019: 110-200). In other explanations, there are some roles of the teacher

which they can help to make success learning and teaching process for an extensive reading activity, and some roles of the teacher in extensive reading activity are presenting following: 1) 1) the student takes full responsibility for acquiring reading skills, 2) the student reads without using a dichotomous dictionary, and 3) the student usually choose his own content and works at his own pace.

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading is one of the skills that people need to learn in the English language. The author sends his idea via an author sign, and the reader then sees the idea from the printed pages (Hasan, H & Ismail, I.2020). Reading is a very complex learning and teacher operation, involving the eye and brain (Mickulecky, 2019: 1-20).

Reading text or part of reading content or document requires an intensive reading. Students must read a reading material or text for information or interpretation in this reading practice. This intensive reading practice is aimed at reading a short text. The search for specific information is an intensive reading activity. Essentially, for the sake of learning, the students read. The students must read a short text and then place the events chronologically or sequently during this intensive reading exercise (Pamela, 2018: 70-120).

Intensive readings can be carried out with a text skimming technique, which can be applied to exercise forms like True or False and summarizes holes for filling (Musdalifah, M., 2019). It is also possible to apply scanning technique by assembling random

paragraphs into sequences using the form of intensive Jumbled paragraphs to clarify the complexity of language structure and the growth of language awareness. This reading experience provides content for the development of greater skills in speaking and writing (Mossback, 2020: 34-67).

Intensive reading has some functions for students who study at university. All of the functions of intensive reading for students in the university such as 1) intensive reading can help the students to search simple information in the context, 2) intensive reading can help the students to find or identify, learn, and understand about the meaning of the words, sentences, and paragraph in the context. In another way, reading also can be used by students to identify the main ideas and supporting ideas of the context, 3) intensive reading can help the students to learn the content of the context, 4) intensive reading can help the students to integrate information of the context, and 5) intensive reading can be used by students to critique the content of the context (Peggy, 77-90).

Method

This research was a descriptive study using three instruments, namely observation and interview guidelines, and student perception questionnaire. The subjects in this study were comprehensive, intensive reading classes by lecturers, as well as by 26 English language learning students on the Enrekang South Sulawesi Muhammadiyah University campus, taking extensive and intensive reading courses. The data collected during this study were determined by the predetermined objects of research: (1) implementation of blended learning

through observation and interviews and (2) students' perceptions of learning through questionnaires. The data in this study that had been collected were then analyzed descriptively.

Results and Discussions

a. Application of Blended Learning

The implementation of blended learning in extensive and intensive reading courses was carried out beginning in the semester in the 2018/2019 academic year. The study load that must be taken by students in taking extensive reading courses was 3 SKS and intensive reading was 3 credits during the academic year. The convergence of traditional (facial) and online learning contributed to the introduction of blended learning in extensive and comprehensive lecture classes. The following details were provided for the implementation of Blended Learning in extensive listening courses:

1. Online Course

At this stage, the course activities conducted online. Students could attend online lectures by accessing reading material that came from applications based on Android or IOS, such as iBooks, and others. This material was adapted to the material to be studied in a face to face session. After reading material that came from applications based on Android and IOS, such as eBooks, etc. The lecturer asked students individually to make as detailed notes as possible about what they had read and the results were then discussed in groups.

In this online course, the lecturer also provided a discussion forum that involved the use of internet-based social

networking, specifically the WA Group. The WA group account, named 'PBI UM Enrekang', was used as a question and answer forum on these listening materials. Besides, this feature was also used to upload assignments given by lecturers online. However, when viewed on a Facebook account, the intensity of online discussions was still very low. This could be seen from a number of posts given by lecturers, only a few students responded to the post. This was caused by network connection limitations. In addition, the most basic obstacle is related to hardware ownership. There were still many students who did not have the hardware to support online discussions. They could only use the hardware when they were on a campus where 7 tablets were available for students to use. Although blended learning requires a variety of media, if facilities and resources are not funded, students may find it difficult to engage in online independent research.

2. Conventional (Face to face) Course

In this process, course activities were carried out in the English classroom and laboratory PBI UM-Enrekang. This lecture activity discussed the reading material they had read and learned at home. The lecturer started this course by throwing a few questions about the contents of the reading material and students giving feedback to each question. Then the lecturer presented the reading material again. After this process was complete, students discussed some important information that they found in the reading material. Furthermore, the lecture ends with students going to the front of the class to retell the reading material. In this activity, students look very enthusiastic about the learning

process. They were actively involved in class discussions.

b. Student Perceptions

Students responded positively to the implementation of blended learning. Recapitulation student responded to explore aspects that were presented in the table 1.

The table showed that students were able to accept the implementation of blended learning in extensive and extensive lecture courses. All students believed that the contact between students and between teachers and students improved through the integrated learning model. Students should not only discuss their computer equipment with one another in a classroom (Mega, I., 2020).

Table 1. Perceptions of Students on the Implementation of Blended Learning

NO	SEARCHED ASPECTS	CATEGORY
1	The intensity of interaction between students	Increase
2	The intensity of interaction between students and lecturers	Increase
3	The quality of interaction between students	Increase
4	The quality of interaction between students and lecturers	Increase
5	Student satisfaction towards learning	Satisfied
6	Workload	Is on or Moderate
7	Effectiveness, ease in understanding / achieving goals	Active

Thus, the learning process is not bound by place and time. In addition, increased interaction between students and lecturers occurs because lecturers not only interact with students in the classroom during learning, but students could also interact with lecturers through activities conducted by lecturers used digital devices, such as Skype, Facebook, and online lecture activities that other. This was in line with what was stated by Hameed et al (2019: 7-20). They revealed that the use of technology was very useful in supporting face-to-face learning activities where this allowed students to have more control over the time and place to interact with learning material. This feature of learning increased the intensity of interaction (Jabri, U., & Samad, I., 2019) in learning.

The increased contact between students and teachers followed by an improved level of interaction between students. By used the blended learning model, students discussed more the lecture material. Online activities were more used by students to talk about things related to lecture material. In addition, students could more easily access information from lecturers. Students could communicate directly with the lecturer if there were problems in learning through online tools. However, there were still students who reveal that the quality of interaction with lecturers decreased because they think teachers should describe the material they were learning fully in class.

Students also expressed pleasure in participating in learning with the blended learning model. They were confident in their understanding and satisfied with the learning that was

followed. Student satisfaction was generally expressed because this model makes it easy for students to understand the learning material. They are satisfied with the learning resources that could be accessed anytime and anywhere. They did not have to wait for the presence of teachers in the classroom to obtain learning material because they could interact with lecturers or students without being bound by time. In general, students are given a positive response to this learning model and expected that this learning model was also applied to other subjects. This was in line with the findings of Demirci (2019: 27) which revealed that blended learning in the form of online homework assignments received positive responses from students. Students stated that learning was effective in facilitating student learning and motivating students to learn.

Furthermore, in the extensive and intensive reading courses, students must be able to understand monologue writing discourse related to the function of English in daily life. Therefore, each student must actively read various written discourses of various goals and functions and read various types of English written discourses. In this case, students assumed the workload on this subject by using blended learning was moderate. Their opinions were determined by internet connection constraints. The workload would be light if an internet connection was available, and vice versa. In accordance with Syarif's description (2018: 238), the learning process will be more successful in a blended learning model as traditional learning is enabled by e-learning, which in this case lies within the IT infrastructure and can be carried

out anytime and anywhere. Thus, if learning using the Blended Learning model was not filled with supporting facilities, the implementation of this learning would not run smoothly.

Blended learning has also proved successful in learning, as a favorable environment has been developed based on the advantages of integrating face-to-face and online learning. The learning atmosphere in the classroom felt good for students. They were motivated to be able to understand the material they were learning online so they could take part in learning in the classroom with confidence. They could also interact intensively with each other discussing subject matter that they like online. This was in line with what was expressed by Vaughan (2019: 81) that if Blended Learning could be effectively implemented, the potential results that could be obtained was an educational climate that was conducive to active student learning. In other words, it could be concluded that the learning process used blended learning was successfully implemented well in the extensive and intensive reading courses at PBI UM-Enrekang, Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi.

Conclusions

Intensive and intensive reading classes, blended learning is carried out in two ways, i.e. online lectures and face to face lectures. Students must access read material from Android or IOS related applications such as iBooks, etc. In online lectures. Instead students and lecturers teach in person by talking about reading materials that they saw, heard and read at home. Students view this learning pattern in a constructive way. The strength and quality of student

interaction, and of teacher interactions, are growing. Students are also able to know using this model. The workload that must be done by students is moderate. Therefore, the blended learning model is effectively applied to extensive and intensive reading courses.

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