STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BLENDED LEARNING IN A LARGE ENGLISH CLASS

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Abstract. This present study aims to explore Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pekalongan students' perceptions regarding the implementation of combining the features of face-to-face instruction and online learning via *Edmodo* learning management system (LMS) called blended learning (BL) in their large English class. This research was conducted in the class consisted of 46 students who took English III course at the university. The participants completed three types of open-ended questionnaires. The findings reveal that the implementation of BL had a positive effect on perceived quality and student satisfaction in the teaching and learning processes. Most of the students commented that the implementation of BL helped make the course and activities interesting because of the technology integration in their large class. BL, likewise, encouraged them to enhance their language skills, particularly reading and writing. These results illustrate that the language skills could be also improved by incorporating the tremendous advancement of technology as a part of language instruction. Meanwhile, another finding reports that BL might have a better impact on the students' level of engagement since most of the research participants rated themselves as more engaged in this blended course.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Perceptions, Engagement, Large English Class

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes have a pivotal role in enhancing the use of internet-based pedagogical contents and resources in their classroom. This is due to the consideration that the teachers attempt to provide enriched learning materials and to extend the teaching and learning processes beyond the classroom or school day. The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning processes has shifted the paradigm of education around the globe.[1] An increasing emphasis of this paradigm is blended learning (BL). This learning model combines the best elements of face-to-face and online learning and emerges as the predominant model of the future.[2] BL, likewise, provides the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning that are presented in an interactive, meaningful learning environment.[3] BL, therefore, comes to the surface as well-adapted learning model in using information and communication technology in teaching and learning processes.

On the one hand, coping with its effectiveness, it is argued that BL encourages students to learn more effectively in a blended learning environment.[4] Furthermore, BL illustrates students' positive attitudes towards BL in terms of three domains, namely: the process, ease of use, and content. It demonstrates the students' internet and IT skills and interests due to internet availability and accessibility.[5] Additionally, this learning model also motivates students to take responsibility for their own learning process and decide when and how to use the learning resources provided. They can discuss and share materials with their

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[1] Tatiana Krasnova and Maria Demeshko, "Tutor-Mediated Support in Blended Learning," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 166 (2015), p. 405.
[2] John Watson, "Blended Learning: The Convergence of Online and Face-to-Face Education. Promising Practices in Online Learning," *North American Council for Online Learning*, (2008), p 3.
[3] Manjot Kaur, "Blended Learning - Its Challenges and Future," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 93 (2013), p. 612.
[4] Meltem Eryilmaz, "The Effectiveness of Blended Learning Environments," *Contemporary Issues in Education Research (Online)* 8, no. 4 (2015), p. 251.
[5] Dana Adas and Wafa Abu Shmais, "Students' Perceptions towards Blended Learning Environment Using the OCC," *An-Najah Univ. J. Res. (Humanities)* 25, no. 6 (2011), p. 1681.

peers. Not to mention, the students receive useful feedback from their teacher in both face-to-face and online learning. It reflects that the students may erode negative impressions when having a BL environment, including waste of time, easy cheating, and social isolation.[6] These advantages imply that BL is deemed significant to develop students' skills.

On the other hand, when applying BL, EFL teachers are demanded to redesign and re-elaborate learning materials so as to meet their students' needs. The limitation of the BL implementation can be partially explained by the well-documented resistance of teachers to online learning.[7] The last but not the least, the issues of time and resource management require more well-established consideration through the appropriate design and implementation of BL. Some teachers, for example, still use the time restriction in the BL environment to cover the basics of grammar and vocabulary instruction (content delivery), repetitive activities (drilling), and a limited amount of group work activities (time permitting).[8] Those challenges denote that teachers and faculty should be well-prepared to design BL courses to students.

Meanwhile, one of the class conditions, a small or large class, has a significant role in deciding which learning model is considered appropriate for language learning. These class sizes refer to the number of the students in the class. Teachers cannot observe the students' improvement intensively, and the students do not have enough time to discuss with their teacher.[9] In addition, large classes come with several problems for teachers, which is unlikely reduced the foreseeable future.[10] This phenomenon shows that a big number of students enables to have more differences in some aspects such as students' need, interest, difficulty, and so on.

Dealing with language learning in large classes, it is pointed out that the use of web is maintaining the benefits of small-class instruction in large classes. Implementing BL enables teachers to manage their big classes as intensive as small classes since the teachers may provide their students with more time allocation.[11] Not to mention, students attain better score on a test in the BL environment with larger influence of tutoring than in a traditional classroom setting where all activities are from lecturer to students, with limited time for giving feedback to the students.[12] However, large classes tend to have impacts on "strained impersonal relations between students and the instructor, limited range of teaching methods, discomfort among instructors, and a perception that faculty who teach large classes are of lower status at the institution (McLeod, 1998).[13] It highlights that BL is expected to be able to accommodate students who do not have time to express their ideas in the classroom.

Based on the elaborations presented above, the current study seeks the answers of the research questions: 1) what are the students' perceptions of the implementation of BL in a

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[6] Mohammed Mohammed Nasser Hassan Ja'ashan, "Perceptions and Attitudes towards Blended Learning for English Courses: A Case Study of Students at University of Bisha," *English Language Teaching* 8, no. 9 (2015), p. 40.

[7] Lynn M. Jeffrey et al., "Blended Learning: How Teachers Balance the Blend of Online and Classroom Components," *Journal of Information Technology Education* 13 (2014), p. 122.

[8] Christopher Johnson and Debra Marsh, "Blended Language Learning: An Effective Solution but Not without Its Challenges," *Higher Learning Research Communications* 4, no. 3 (2014), p. 28.

[9] David Pedder, "Are Small Classes Better? Understanding Relationships between Class Size, Classroom Processes and Pupils' Learning," *Oxford Review of Education* 32, no. 2 (2006), pp. 213–234.

[10] Muna Thaher, "The Effects of Large Class on EFL Students at An-Najh National University," *An-Najah Univ. J. Res. (Humanities)* 19, no. 3 (2005), p. 1049.

[11] Gabriele Meiselwitz, "Using the Web to Maintain the Benefits of Small Class Instruction in Large Classes," *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges* 17, no. 3 (2002), p. 146.

[12] Erik Wilberg, "Large Classes: Better Results with Blended Learning," *Journal of International Doctoral Research (JIDR)*, (2016), p. 24.

[13] Jason M. Carpenter, "Effective Teaching Methods for Large Classes," *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences Education* 24, no. 2 (2006), p. 13.

large English class? and 2) how does BL enhance the students' engagement in a large English class? Further, this study took advantage of *Edmodo* as the learning management system (LMS) in the online learning combined with the face-to-face instruction. This free social platform was created in 2008 by Nick Borg and Jeff O'Hara, is specified for an educational field, and is available at www.edmodo.com, Play Store, and iOS. Interestingly, the difference between *Edmodo* and other social network sites is that *Edmodo* is a social learning platform designed for collaboration, communication, the sharing of knowledge, homework and discussion between students, teachers and parents.[14] It, likewise, allows teachers and students to communicate with each other via messages, thus providing learners with the chance to communicate and collaborate in a virtual classroom environment.[15] In short, *Edmodo* connects students-teachers-parents to control the students' activity in learning process and accommodate the students and teachers in learning outside the classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' perceptions of BL have been investigated in several previous studies. A study aiming at investigating King Khalid University EFL students' views concerning the advantages and limitations of BL via Blackboard platform. The results demonstrate clear advantages of this learning model in broadening students' reading opportunities and enriching their English vocabulary. Meanwhile, the limitations BL were highlighted by a number of practical suggestions, including solving technical problems, providing proper training to students, increasing the number of labs, and recognizing excellent performance of both instructors and students.[16] Another study investigating tertiary-level learners' perceptions concerning BL used the questionnaire administered at the end of the intervention in BL. The findings reveal that combining face-to-face instruction with Moodle, one of course management systems, led to establishing efficient learning environments.[17]

Similarly, research that examined Saudi female students' perceptions of learning English in a BL environment in the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation Colleges (TVTC) via a LMS called Doroob explored factors that affect students' perceptions in the BL environment. The quantitative phase of data collection employed an online questionnaire that deals with the students' perceptions. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain more insight into students' acceptance and the factors that play an influential role in shaping their perceptions. The results suggest students' positive perception towards learning English using BL model.[18]

Relating to teaching large classes, a study was conducted to identify effective teaching methods for a large class setting. The findings of this study uncover that determined faculty members should attempt to include constructive, active teaching methods in their courses whenever possible. This study also promotes that structured and controlled collaboration (e.g. Jigsaw and case study) would probably be most comfortable to the

[14] Kandappan Balasubramanian, V. Jaykumar, and Leena Nitin Fukey, "A Study on 'Student Preference towards the Use of Edmodo as a Learning Platform to Create Responsible Learning Environment," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 144 (2014), p. 418.

[15] Didem Inel Ekici, "The Use of Edmodo in Creating an Online Learning Community of Practice for Learning to Teach Science," *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences* 5, no. 2 (2017), p. 93.

[16] Abdul Wahed Q. Al Zumor et al., "EFL Students' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Environment: Advantages, Limitations and Suggestions for Improvement," *English Language Teaching* 6, no. 10 (2013), pp. 95-110.

[17] Aysel Sahin-Kizil, "Blended Instruction for EFL Learners: Engagement, Learning and Course Satisfaction," *JALT CALL Journal* 10, no. 3 (2014), pp. 175–188.

[18] Khadijah Alaidarous and Abeer Ahmed Madini, "Exploring EFL Students' Perception in Blended Learning Environment in Saudi Technical Education Context," *International Journal of Educational Investigations* 3, no. 6 (2016), pp. 69–81.

students as opposed to unstructured and uncontrolled experiences.[19] Lastly, another study investigated the effective implementation of BL in large classes. This study used webinars, online tutoring, and online contact via the Slack program besides conventional meeting in the classroom. The findings expose that the introduction of online elements such as online tutoring must be well-integrated into the overall course planning. If not, it will create confusion and dissatisfaction.[20]

Those previous studies illustrate that BL has been an alternative to teach students which involves teachers' ability and students' comfort. However, none of them provides the implementation of BL for teaching a large EFL class, especially in Indonesia. Therefore, the current research addresses a gap that there are no previous studies presented above investigated either BL in the context of a large English class or the use of *Edmodo* as a LMS platform responsible for delivering the online part of the blended experience.

What is Blended Learning?

The notions of blended learning (BL) have been proposed by some scholars. BL is defined as an "enriched, student-centered learning experiences made possible by the harmonious integration of various strategies, achieved by combining face-to-face interaction with ICT".[21] This definition emphasizes three main dimensions that should be considered in any blended learning design, namely: the student-centered learning experience, the learning strategies, ad tools of implementation. BL is a way of meeting the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals by integrating the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning.[22]

BL, additionally, is a combination of instructional modalities (web-based and self-paced learning), delivery media (i.e. Internet, lectures, PowerPoint presentations, textbooks), instructional methods (face-to-face or technology-based sessions), and web-based technologies (chat rooms, blogs, and online courses). In what ways the combination is done depends on such criteria as learning goals, course content, teacher experience, teaching style, learner characteristics, etc.[23] Moreover, there are some considerations towards the implementation of BL, including the role of the physical space, planning and creating class content, using the online space, providing feedback, flexibility versus structure, class participation versus class attendance, and office hours.[24]

Not to mention, four strategies need to be taken into account in the implementation of BL. These strategies present web-based delivery which promotes independence and self-reliance in learning, face-to-face interaction in which human interaction is necessary to build a deeper understanding, creation of deliverables that expect students to create learning products, and collaborative extension of learning (Barnum and Paarmann, 2002).[25] In other words, the four strategies emphasize the integration of face-to-face interaction and online

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[19] Jason M. Carpenter, "Effective Teaching Methods for Large Classes," *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences Education* 24, no. 2 (2006), pp. 13–23.

[20] Wilberg, "Large Classes", pp. 9-27.

[21] Valerie Anne Clifford, Juliet Henderson, and Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA). Conference (34th : 2011 : Gold Coast Queensland), "Shifting identities: international staff negotiating new academic identities," (2011), p. 366.

[22] Kaye Thorne, *Blended Learning: How to Integrate Online & Traditional Learning* (London: Sterling, VA: Kogan Page, 2003), p. 16.

[23] Gülten Kosar, "A Study of EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Blended Learning", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232 (2016), p 737.

[24] Gilly Salmon, "Learning Innovation: A Framework for Transformation," *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning* 17, no. 2 (2014), p. 222.

[25] Kosar, "A Study of EFL Instructors' Perceptions of Blended Learning", p. 738.

learning in order to provide students' autonomy in learning, encourage students to produce learning outputs, and stimulate collaboration among students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was designed as qualitative research. It employed an action research design consisting of three cycles. Each cycle comprised four steps, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection.[26] The above statement of the problems was investigated at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training of Institut Agama Islam Negeri Pekalongan, Central Java, Indonesia. No courses at the faculty use English as the medium of instruction for non-English department students. It implies that English course is the only source of input in the formal instructional setting for the students. This research was conducted in a single classroom consisting of 46 undergraduate students. They were third semester students of Islamic Education department who took English III course.

The data were collected through three types of open-ended questionnaires as the instruments of this study. These instruments were used to uncover the students' perceptions of the implementation of BL and to explain how this intervention enhanced their engagement in this blended environment. The students, for instance, were asked whether they found BL lead to positive learning environment in a large class after having the three cycles of the action research.

The procedures to conduct this research were illustrated as follows. The first step was designing the research instruments, preparing learning materials, and creating an online learning group on *Edmodo*. The following step was carrying out the first cycle of action research. It was the first implementation of BL by combining face-to-face instruction in the classroom with online learning via *Edmodo* group outside the classroom. The results of teaching and learning process in this cycle were evaluated for preparing the second cycle. After dealing with the first cycle, the students were asked to fill the first open-ended questionnaire to gather their perceptions of the face-to-face instruction in their large class.

The third step was conducting the second cycle. This step was the follow-up to the previous cycle by providing the students with different learning materials. After implementing BL in this cycle, the students were asked to fill the second open-ended questionnaire to explore their perceptions of online learning on *Edmodo*. The next step was carrying out the third cycle. This step was the implementation of the evaluation in the second cycle. Furthermore, the students were provided with another learning material. After having this cycle, the students were asked to fill the third open-ended questionnaire to investigate their perceptions of the implementation of BL and explain how this learning model enhanced their engagement in their large English class.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section aims to report, explain, and discuss research results based on the analysis of data and discussions so as to answer the statement of the problems.

Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Blended Learning in a Large English Class

In the cycle I, there were 10 questions of an open-ended questionnaire. This questionnaire was addressed to the students for exploring their perceptions of the face-to-face instruction in their large English class. The first question was dealing with whether face-to-face learning provided the students with adequate time to learn English in their large class.

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[26] Anne Burns, *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*, ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 8.

Interestingly, they preferred face-to-face classes, stated that one-on-one support provided during classes was important for learning. However, 70% of them exposed that they did not have sufficient time to learn the English course in their large class for 100-minute-class hour, whereas the rest felt they could take advantage of the class hour to participate.

The second question coped with what difficulties the students found in learning English and how to overcome those difficulties. For this item, they revealed that almost all of the students frequently found difficulties in learning English regarding their large class. In fact, they belong to Islamic Education department in which English is not the language used to deliver learning materials in other courses. It also contributed to the barriers that they experienced. Meanwhile, the third question covered the materials that were interesting to learn. 64% of the research participants found that grammar and pronunciation made them interested in learning English mostly. It shows that the majority of the students were willing to engage in learning English well by grasping various learning materials.

The next question was related to whether they preferred learning English in the classroom. Actually, the students' perceptions were positive about face-to-face learning. Nonetheless, 80% of the students noted that they could not perform their engagement in their large class. It indicates that most of the students needed another learning model to enhance their engagement in their large English class. The fifth question was concerning whether a big number of students in the classroom restricted them to ask questions when they did not understand the learning materials. 75% of the students' answers for this item denoted that their large class needed sufficient time to have question and answer section.

The following question highlighted whether they actively participated in their large class. For this item, 76% of the students highlighted the big number of students in their class restricted their chance to show their participation. They realized the importance of class participation to create active learning atmosphere, but the chance to ask question and get feedback either from their lecturer or their peers were limited due to the large class. This result indicates that collaboration with the lecturer and classmates during the class had a positive influence on their learning. Meanwhile, the seventh question tried to seek their answer of how many times in a week that they allocated to learn English outside the classroom. The fact for this item revealed that 85% of the students allocated no more than two hours per week. Interestingly, they preferred to learn English through listening to music, watching movies, and accessing English learning-based resources in the internet, involving BBC, VOA, and other English learning platforms. It illustrates they had good motivation in learning English outside the classroom.

The eighth question elaborated whether the students practiced their English skills based on what they received in the classroom. 30% of them practiced their English skills after class. It was due to the fact that the students required additional resources to learn English. Online learning model could be an alternative to deal with the students' problem. The next question revealed whether the students used online resources and how the resources facilitated them to improve their English skills. Considering the students' negative perceptions of face-to-face learning that dealt with time management and the lecturer's teaching style, the students needed more learning resources. 70% of them accessed online learning media such as *Facebook, Twitter, YouTube*, and others. The last question investigated what type of online learning media that the students used to enhance their English skills. 50% of the students used *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and other websites providing English learning. It noticed that their lack of engagement in class motivate them to improve their English skills through various online learning media.

Overall, the results of this questionnaire in the cycle I denote the students' need for a new learning atmosphere that can increase the quality of their English learning and their access to useful information. This finding is in line with the study proposing that blending the

advancement of technology with face-to-face instruction can enhance the quality of learning and provide more collaborative learning experiences.[27] It also fits another previous research asserting that some key aspects of merging face-to-face interaction with online learning, including the quality of online teaching, resources, workload, and student interaction, are required to be regarded so as to yield better learning outcomes.[28]

When carrying out the cycle II, ten items of an open-ended questionnaire were designed to explore the students' perceptions of the implementation of online learning on the *Edmodo* group in their large class. The first question tried to seek the answer of whether the instructions provided in the *Edmodo* group was clear. 75% of the students promoted that the instructions were clear although there were some students who needed more adjustment to this LMS. This result implies that the learning materials provided in the *Edmodo* group required had to be well-organized so as to make them understand. Meanwhile, the next question covered what difficulties that they encountered in understanding and responding the given instructions on the *Edmodo*. For this item, 70% of them viewed that the instructions were clear, and they could respond to both the learning materials posted by the lecturer and their classmates' assignment submitted on the *Edmodo* group. They might share and comment with the lecturer or their peers on the group.

The third question explored their perceptions of whether online learning by using the *Edmodo* group enabled the students to turn in the assignments given. 35% of the students commented that they found some problems to submit the assignments that were organized on the *Edmodo* features. These difficulties came to the floor because *Edmodo* was something new for them. The following question attempted to catch their perceptions of language skills that could improve when participating in the *Edmodo* group. For this item, 80% of the students commented that they found interested in using *Edmodo* since they could access various learning materials that were posted by the lecturer and students. Not to mention, language areas such as grammar and pronunciation were also getting better since they got feedback from the lecturer as well their peers. It demonstrates that the students realized that this intervention helped them improve their English language areas.

The fifth question was dealing with the ease of access in more flexible time and setting when the students learn English by using *Edmodo*. 75% percent of the students' comments were positive. The comments indicate that the online component helped with the flexibility in time management and setting so that they could keep up with the learning materials when they were not able to attend the face-to-face class. The sixth question coped with their perceptions of whether online-based English learning provided the students with more chances to ask questions. The students described in 70% of the comments that the online resources supported their learning outside of the classroom. They requested more online learning in 30% of the comments. This results suggest that three aspects emerged from the positive comments about online learning in the *Edmodo* group related to time management, supplemental resources, and requests for more online learning.

The next question covered their perceptions of whether the online learning by using *Edmodo* gave more opportunities for them to get feedback in relation to the difficulties they encountered. 35% of the comments were negative towards feedback they received in the online learning. Two issues appeared from the comments included avoidance of online learning due to a preference for face-to-face instruction and low connectivity. Nevertheless, 65% of the comments stated *Edmodo* benefited the students in getting feedback from the lecturer and their peers. The eighth question tried to elaborate whether the students received

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[27] Abeer Ali Okaz, "Integrating Blended Learning in Higher Education," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 186 (2015), p. 602.
[28] Paul Ginns and Robert Ellis, "Quality in Blended Learning: Exploring the Relationships between on-Line and Face-to-Face Teaching and Learning," *The Internet and Higher Education* 10, no. 1 (2007), p. 63.

peer feedback when experiencing the online learning. This item related to the previous one. It implies that not only did the lecturer give feedback, but their classmates participated to comment on other works.

The ninth question highlighted the students' perceptions of whether they could carry out discussion in the *Edmodo* group. 72% of the students commented that *Edmodo* facilitated group discussion although only few students actively participated in the group. Furthermore, the group discussion could run well if the lecturer encouraged the students with certain learning materials posted on the *Edmodo* group. The final question tried to reveal their difficulties that the students faced when using *Edmodo*. This last item highlights the previous finding stating that lack of internet connectivity and some difficult instructions to understand.

From the results of the open-ended questionnaire in the cycle II, most of the research participants promote positive perceptions of the use of *Edmodo* as the social platform in the implementation of BL. Several studies presented in this study have highlighted positive views about *Edmodo*.[29] Thus, it can be pointed out that the findings are in line with the results of some previous studies. The students' perceptions also fulfill another research finding stating that *Edmodo* promoted EFL students' motivation and participation and teacher-students' communication.[30] In addition, *Edmodo* fostered the combined knowledge creation of a group better than individual diaries since this social platform facilitated sharing ideas beyond the classroom and allowed students to continue discussion at additional times.[31]

Likewise, another significant impact of the *Edmodo* use is the establishment of self-directed learning (SDL). It meets the study result highlighting that *Edmodo* played an effective tool to be used individually and collaboratively so as to support students' responsibility for learning and developing their SDL.[32] Lastly, the students also received feedback when experiencing learning processes by using *Edmodo*. It is declared that this learning application showed the use of a different color in providing feedback that helped the students be aware of their errors.[33] Similarly, *Edmodo* was capable of assisting teachers to make content understandable, check students' understanding, and elicit their responses.[34]

However, some barriers also came to the surface when using *Edmodo* as the part of the implementation of BL in this research. It is parallel with the prior study stating that even though the great potential for the use of *Edmodo* in education, thorough thinking was needed to find the best way to enhance EFL teaching and learning processes by employing this emerging tool.[35] More specifically, the students had a problem of poor internet connectivity.

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[29] Balasubramanian, Jaykumar, and Fukey, "A Study on 'Student Preference towards the Use of Edmodo as a Learning Platform to Create Responsible Learning Environment'", pp. 416-422; Ekici, "The Use of Edmodo in Creating an Online Learning Community of Practice for Learning to Teach Science", pp. 91–106.

[30] Shatha Turki Alshawi and Faisal Abdullah Alhomoud, "The Impact of Using Edmodo on Saudi University EFL Students' Motivation and Teacher-Student Communication," *International Journal of Education* 8, no. 4 (2016), p. 117.

[31] Balasubramanian, Jaykumar, and Fukey, "A Study on 'Student Preference towards the Use of Edmodo as a Learning Platform to Create Responsible Learning Environment", p. 421.

[32] Manal Mohamed Khodary, "Edmodo Use to Develop Saudi EFL Students' Self-Directed Learning," *English Language Teaching* 10, no. 2 (2017), p. 130.

[33] Bita Bahrami Shams-Abadi, Seyyed Dariush Ahmadi, and Ali Gholami Mehrdad, "The Effect of Edmodo on EFL Learners" Writing Performance," *International Journal of Educational Investigations* 2, no. 2 (2015), p. 95.

[34] Adin Fauzi, "The Effect of Edmodo on Students' Writing Skill in Recount Text," *IJPTE: International Journal of Pedagogy and Teacher Education* 1, no. 2 (2017), pp. 78-79.

[35] Fatimah Al-Kathiri, "Beyond the Classroom Walls: Edmodo in Saudi Secondary School EFL Instruction, Attitudes and Challenges," *English Language Teaching* 8, no. 1 (2014), p. 199.

This obstacle was included into a common barrier faced in e-learning in general, not *Edmodo* in specific.[36]

Meanwhile, the cycle III of this research also promoted 10 items of an open-ended questionnaire. This questionnaire was aimed at investigating the students' perceptions after they experienced learning processes in their large English class. The first item concerned whether BL provided the students with lots of chances to participate actively both in the classroom and in the *Edmodo* group. 65% of the students commented that BL provided them with more opportunities to participate. What they did not understand in face-to-face instruction could be asked when having online learning in the *Edmodo* group. That was the reason why BL promoted the students' engagement in their large class. The second item related to whether the students received the feedback of their submitted assignments or learning activities when they experienced BL model. 72% of the students agreed to note that they received feedback for their assignments in both face-to-face interaction and online learning. It illustrates that their assignments were not only graded, but also provided with feedback that could stimulate them to improve their English skills.

The next item included their perceptions of whether BL model contributed a positive impact on the way that the students manage their learning time to enhance their English skills. 65% percent of the students commented that the combination of the face-to-face and online learning enabled them to explore unclear understanding emerged in the classroom, and it could be followed up on the *Edmodo* group. This result demonstrates that BL promotes the flexibility of time and settings, specifically for the students in a large class, to cover what they have received in the classroom to be enriched in online learning. The fourth item attempted to uncover their perceptions of whether the students required other English learning materials to be elaborated in the BL model. 70% of the students considered other learning materials to be implemented in the BL intervention. This result indicates the students' satisfaction towards the implementation of BL in their large English class.

The following item exposed whether the BL model encouraged them to improve their listening skill in their English large class. 62% of the students exposed that BL provided them with a positive impact on the improvement of the listening skill in their large class. It was due to the learning activities not only coped with listening comprehension, but also cover the opportunity to communicate what they comprehended. In their large class, the students got a limited chance to experience the listening activities. Consequently, they needed to carry out the activities outside the classroom. The *Edmodo* group was designed to facilitate them. The sixth item elaborated whether BL model could help the students to enhance their speaking skill in their English large class. For this item, 56% of the students commented that BL provided the chance to enhance their speaking skill in their class. It proposes that not all the speaking activities could be done in the face-to-face instruction so that they needed more chances provided in the *Edmodo* group.

The seventh item coped with the students' perceptions of whether BL model gave a positive effect on the improvement of their reading skill in their English large class. 68% of them exposed that combining face-to-face instruction and online learning could encourage them to enhance their reading skill as well. The result illustrates that the students' large class did not have adequate time to carry out reading process in the face-to-face instruction. It implies why online reading passages posted on the *Edmodo* group could benefit the students in the reading processes. The next item covered whether the BL model provided more practices to build better writing skill in their English large class. Dealing with this item, BL was also deemed to have a positive impact for students to enhance their writing skill since not

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[36] Khaleel M. Al-Said, "Students' Perceptions of Edmodo and Mobile Learning and Their Real Barriers towards Them," *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 14, no. 2 (2015), p. 178.

all the writing processes were covered during the face-to-face instruction. On the *Edmodo* group, they students could upload the file of their writing and got feedback. That was another reason why BL benefited the students in their large English class.

The ninth item demonstrated the obstacles that the students found in the implementation of BL in their large English class. 65% of the students noted that in addition to all activities managed in the face-to-face instruction, the students required to allocate their time outside the classroom to actively participate in the *Edmodo* group. Lastly, the tenth item showed the way that the students performed to overcome the barriers when experiencing the BL model in their large class. 60% of the students commented that their strong desire could be the main factor to deal with the obstacles when experiencing the BL model. BL, therefore, model was supposed to provoke the students' engagement in their large class.

The results of the third open-ended questionnaire illustrate that the students perceived their language learning by implementing BL in their large English class positively. This result is in accordance with a study that proved students' satisfaction and positive perceptions of BL since this LMS could create efficient learning environments.[37] Regarding some factors that influence the students' perceptions, this present study found that the perceived ease of use and the richness of content are deemed two indicators towards their perceptions of the implementation of BL in their large class. It goes in line with the statement that BL offered the easiness of the learning system, the instructor characteristics, the content richness, and the suitability of learning activities.[38]

Moreover, the research participants declared the advantages of this LMS in enhancing chances for participation and their large class and providing meaningful feedback from both their classmates and lecturer. This result is consistent with another study suggesting that BL enhanced the students' confidence, providing opportunities for useful feedback, and improving communication among students and between students and their instructors.[39] The students also reported that BL helped them improve their language skills and areas. This finding fits the research promoting that (1) students enjoyed the BL course design composed of different online writing activities; and (2) their abilities to write academic English showed qualitative improvement in writing styles.[40]

Nevertheless, even though BL promotes those apparent benefits, this LMS still deals with some challenges. One of the results implies that a well-prepared BL course design was required to enhance their engagement in both face-to-face instruction and online learning. It is in line with the study result pointing out that BL curriculum design needs careful attention to build bridges between face-to-face and online components within a course.[41] Moreover, it deals with the extent to which the instructional designer can support faculty who are converting their courses in-class to online.[42]

How Blended Learning Enhances the Students' Engagement in a Large English Class
The second and third questionnaires were related to the students' perceptions of whether this BL was effective in keeping them engaged in their large English class. They

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[37] Sahin-Kizil, "Blended Instruction for EFL Learners", p. 185.

[38] Alaidarous and Madini, "Exploring EFL Students' Perception in Blended Learning Environment in Saudi Technical Education Context", p. 79.

[39] Wahed Q. Al Zumor et al., "EFL Students' Perceptions of a Blended Learning Environment", p. 101.

[40] Terumi Miyazoe and Terry Anderson, "Discuss, Reflect, and Collaborate: A Qualitative Analysis of Forum, Blog, and Wiki Use in an EFL Blended Learning Course," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 34 (2012), p. 150.

[41] K. Douglas, Josephine Lang, and Meg Colasante, "The Challenges of Blended Learning Using a Media Annotation Tool," *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* 11, no. 2 (2014), p. 18.

[42] Catherine Carré, "The Challenge of Designing Blended Courses: From Structured Design to Creative Faculty Support!" *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology* 41, no. 3 (2015), p. 1.

were asked to reflect on their experiences in the BL course compared to only face-to-face one. The results of the questionnaires reveal that most of the respondents mentioned that the implementation of BL helped make the learning activities interesting so that it engaged them in their large class. It indicates a positive effect found during the implementation of this intervention in terms of their engagement.

Additionally, relating to the students' interest, they also responded positively. The findings expose that the implementation of BL in the students' large English class allowed them to discuss, comment, and share every time and everywhere in the *Edmodo* group and provided them with more learning activities that cannot be accomplished in a-100-minute class time (two credits). It suggests that the implementation of the BL model might have a better impact on the students' engagement in their large class. Overall, the results for this research question demonstrate a strong relationship between the implementation of BL model and the students' engagement in their large English class.

Based on these findings, it can be noticed that BL stimulated the students to engage in their large English class. This result is consistent with the prior study demonstrating that digital technology use and student engagement can be observed in an effective BL environment.[43] Furthermore, it goes in line with another research asserting that an advantage of BL is that while students had the freedom to study at their own pace, the also had the chance to engage the learning materials given with their peers and the instructor.[44] Finally, this finding also fulfills the statement that the implementation of BL increased the students' acceptance of the BL environment of the course design, motivated them, and enhanced their learning.[45]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study contributes to highlight the students' perceptions of the implementation of BL in their large English class. Interestingly, the research findings promote the students' positive perceptions of BL as this intervention helped them enhance their English language skills and provided them with interactive exposure in learning English. Likewise, the reality that most of the students responded positively to the questions provided in the research instruments exposing their engagement in their large class demonstrates that BL model could create a better learning atmosphere in which the students were more engaged in both classroom and online settings. Based on the data presented in this study, it can also be noticed that the students' engagement with the lecturer and peers enhanced when having teaching and learning processes in both the classroom and the *Edmodo* group. In short, these results have proposed how BL may facilitate the gap between teaching and learning in a large English class.

The findings, nonetheless, also reveal the students' negative perceptions of BL since this LMS was regarded as time consuming and had unfamiliar features on *Edmodo* than in a conventional (face-to-face) instruction. Another barrier of the BL implementation was slow internet connectivity that also created some problems to the students. As a result, the faculty members need to deem this kind of obstacle as the students are in the era of education 4.0, which requires creativity and innovation. It is in line with one of skills for the 21st century learners. Those obstacles are supposed to be taken into consideration by further researchers

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[43] Norman Vaughan, "Student Engagement and Blended Learning: Making the Assessment Connection," *Education Sciences* 4, no. 4 (2014), p. 260.

[44] Ömer Delialioglu, "Student Engagement in Blended Learning Environments with Lecture-Based and Problem-Based Instructional Approaches," *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 15, no. 3 (2012), p. 318.

[45] Dana Adas and Wafa Abu Shmais, "Students' Perceptions towards Blended Learning Environment Using the OCC", pp. 1704.

who plan to conduct their studies in relation to the implementation of BL, particularly in language learning. Not to mention, further research could investigate this instruction mode by regarding various aspects, including teachers' perceptions, learning outcomes, learning styles, and so on.

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