Students' Perceptions on Online Learning of Speaking for Discussion Course

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Abstract

This research aims at finding out students' perceptions on online learning of speaking for discussion course at the English Education Study Program Universitas Bengkulu. This research was descriptive quantitative. The population of this research was the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program of Universitas bengkulu in the 2020/2021 academic year. The sample of this research was used total sampling method, totaling 115 students. The data were collected by using 25 items of the questionnaire which were divided into 3 parts, namely Perceptions of Usefulness (PU), Perceptions of Easy Use and Challenge Faced (PEUC), and Instructor/lecturer Characteristic (IC). This research used simple statistical to analized the data. The result of this study showed that students' positive perception of online learning of speaking for discussion course was 63% which is much higher than negative perception which was only 37%. It means that online learning is good to use during the pandemic situation even though it still has aweaknesses that online learning does not really help them to improve their speaking skill.

Keywords: perceptions, online learning, speaking for discussion course

Introduction

The outbreak of Covid-19 around the world, especially in Indonesia, has made activities unable to run normally. There were many changes such as requiring us to work from home and study from home. This has a huge

impact on the activities we will carry out, one of which is in the world of education, namely teaching and learning activities.

In the world of education, there has been a very large change from traditional system learning to fully online distance learning systems. It changed from face-to-face learning activities to fully online learning. Educators are forced to think more creatively about alternative learning media that fits this new mode of learning. In this new learning mode, internet usage is increasing. Internet connection is an important part of distance learning which allows users to interact beyond time and space. This offers the most suitable way of carrying out academic activities during a pandemic situation.

In addition, distance learning has suddenly become a popular method widely used by educators. Distance learning is of course not a new learning method, but most universities in Indonesia, especially in Bengkulu, have not implemented it. In this case, before the pandemic, Universitas Bengkulu still used face-to-face or traditional classes. However, after the release of Bengkulu University chancellor's circular number 1000 / UN30 / EP / 2020 regarding the guidelines for implementing lectures during the COVID-19 emergency response at the University of Bengkulu, face-to-face lectures and academic activities in the form of seminars and others are temporarily suspended (Alfansi, 2020). Learning is converted into an online form. This causes lecturers to now be required to deliver all lecture materials online during the pandemic. We call it online learning. Online learning is a form of distance education where the teacher and the students are separate in the spatial dimension and that this distance is filled by using technological resources (Casarotti, Filliponi, Pieti & Sartori, 2002, p. 37).

Moore and Anderson (2003, p. 4) stated that the characteristic of distance learning is student centrality where students become the center of learning. It means that the success of the learning process lies in the students themselves. They need to understand their strengths and weaknesses and design their strategies for mastering the target language. Several studies study this topic. Ekmekci (2015) conducted a study on EFL students' satisfaction and assessment of distance English courses. The results

showed that distance English courses were more profitable and interesting. Along with satisfaction, challenges also arise with poor assignments and grading techniques. Besides, Zhong (2008) conducted a study on the autonomy of students in learning English using internet access. The results showed that learning English using internet access was effective in improving English skills as a complement to traditional face-to-face learning environments.

All of the previous studies above address the use of technology in online distance language learning. Most of the results indicate that the use of technology in online distance learning can help students improve their English skills. Unlike previous years, during this Covid-19 pandemic, now all activities are carried out online, including the teaching and learning process. There is no other alternative. Students are required to carry out a full online learning process where technology plays a very important role in the success of the teaching and learning process. This of course can influence students' perceptions of online learning that they have experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is what makes the researcher interested in conducting research on students' perceptions of online learning class.

According to Leathers (1992) perception is a cognitive process carried out by individuals who are used to interpret and understand the world around them. Furthermore, Elliot (1996) adds that perception is the ability to recognize people, objects, or events that are familiar with meanings and expectations. Besides, Walgito (2003, p. 87) stated Perception is the process of human thinking about this certain phenomenon. After defining the term of perception, it can be concluded that perception is a process of human thinking about certain phenomena after they get the sensation from the environment through the sense of organ.

Another recent research study was by Altunay (2019) who conducted a study on Turkish EFL students' perception of distance English learning. The questionnaire data exhibited that the students preferred traditional face-to-face learning context to distance learning. Otherwise,

the interview showed that the distance learning method was more preferable in terms of time and place effectiveness. Besides, Raden (2020) conducted a study with the title "University Students' Perception of online learning in Covid-19 Pandemic; A Case study in a Translation course". The findings showed a positive perception of 90% on the use of omega-T and google Classroom that used in the online class of translation course. On the other hand, Rahman (2020) measured EFL Students' Perceptions of Online Learning During the Covid-19 Outbreak. The results showed that students considered online learning ineffective but they considered online learning useful and helped the learning process during the pandemic.

Moreover, Fitriani (2020) conducted a study about students' perspective of online learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The result showed that students are more comfortable to study in offline class rather than online class, online learning did not help them in improving their speaking skill because there are some problems come from the internet connection, available devices, students' data, and some of them also want to share their idea in the face-to-face situation.

A number of researches discussed students' perceptions of online learning have been conducted both on students' perceptions of online learning in general or in certain classes. In this study, the researchers focused only on online distance learning from speaking for discussion course. The researchers choosing speaking for discussion class because it is different from reading, writing, or even listening classes that students can do individually. Speaking is the ability to produce language to convey ideas fluently where in the process it involves two people, namely speakers and listeners (Kusumawardhani, Syafrizal & Ildi, 2019). So, in the speaking for discussion course, we learn how to speak fluently to express ideas in a discussion that requires a lot of time to practice directly by involving many people. The researchers are interested in seeing students' perceptions regarding changes in the learning system in the speaking for discussion class, which used to be a face-to-face system and now is fully online learning. This is what makes researchers interested in researching with the

title "Students' Perceptions on Online Learning of Speaking for Discussion Course at The English Education Study Program Universitas Bengkulu".

Research Methodology

This research was conducted by using the Descriptive Quantitative Method. The population of this research was the fourth-semester students of the English Education Study Program of Universitas bengkulu in the 2020/2021 academic year. The sample of this research was used total sampling method. According to Arikunto (2013), total sampling is a sampling that is equal to the population. So, the sample of this study was the same as the population with the total 115 students. The data were collected by using 25 items of the questionnaire which were divided into 3 parts, namely Perceptions of Usefulness (PU), Perceptions of Easy Use and Challenge Faced (PEUC), and Instructor/lecturer Characteristic (IC) adapted from Kasyifur and Fitriani (2020). The questionnaire is in Google form and the data was analyzed by Google form and Ms. Excel. After participants have filled the questionnaire, the researcher gets the frequency and percentage of each item in the Google form directly. It will be accumulated by Google form itself. Then, the researcher used Ms. Excel to get the average of each item. After the researcher gets all of the data, the researcher interprets the result of questionnaire accumulation to get the answer to that research question. Then, to see students' responses to online learning in the speaking for discussion course, the researcher used the interval range below:

$$R = \frac{M-N}{K}$$

Note : R = Score Range
　　　 M = highest score of the scale
　　　 N = lowest score of the scale
　　　 K = total categories

(Sugiyono, 2013).

Table 1. Score Range

Perception	Scale Categories	Range
Positive	Strongly Agree	3.26 to 4.0
	Agree	2.51 to 3.25
Negative	Disagree	1.76 to 2.50
	Strongly Disagree	1.0 to 1.75

Result and Discussion

Result

Table 2. The Percentage of Perceptions of the Usefulness Statements

No.	Items	Negative Perceptions		Positive Perceptions		Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
1	Online Learning helps me to understand the topic of discussion more easily (PU1)	59%	29%	11%	1%	1.54
2	Online learning motivates me to speak more confident in order to share idea in discussion (PU2)	47%	7%	8%	38%	2.37
3	Online learning improves my confidence in expressing ideas and opinions in group discussion (PU3)	6%	39%	49%	6%	2.55
4	Online learning encourages me to be more active in group discussion (PU4)	6%	38%	47%	9%	2.58
5	Online learning class help me in improving my speaking skill (PU5)	9%	43%	43%	6%	2.46
6	The materials of speaking for discussion course provided online are easy to understand (PU6)	5%	44%	44%	6%	2.51
7	The environment in online learning has an effect on developing my ideas in speaking for discussion (PU7)	6%	22%	69%	3%	2.70
8	The environment in online learning enhance my speaking skill (PU8)	7%	38%	50%	5%	2.53
	Total	145%	260%	320%	75%	19.24
	Average	18%	33%	40%	9%	2.41
	Total Average	51%		49%		2.41

From the table 2, it was seen that the students gave a negative response on the Usefulness of online learning in the Speaking for discussion class (51%) while 49% of students thought it was useful. Students stated that online learning did not help them understand the topic of discussion more easily, did not motivated them to speak more confidently in order to share ideas in a discussion and did not help them to improve their speaking skills.

However, students also gave positive responses on the usefulness of online learning in the speaking for discussion class. Students stated that online learning improves their confidence in expressing ideas and opinions in group discussion so that encourages them to be more active in a group discussion and the material of speaking for discussion course provided online was easy to understand so that can enhance their speaking skills.

Table 3. The Percentage of Perceptions of Easy Use and Challenge faced

No	Items	Negative Perceptions		Positive Perceptions		Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
1	I use a variety of online learning application such as WhatsApp, zoom, and google meet in speaking for discussion class (PEUC1)	6%	7%	48%	39%	3.20
2	I know how to use the application such WhatsApp, zoom, and google meet used in speaking for discussion class (PEUC2)	7%	5%	32%	56%	3.37
3	I have no problem with internet connection during speaking for discussion online class (PEUC3)	19%	31%	32%	18%	2.50
4	I think the applications such as WhatsApp, zoom, and google meet support the improvement of my speaking skill (PEUC4)	5%	33%	46%	16%	272
5	I think applications such as WhatsApp, zoom, and google meet are practical to share idea in online group discussion (PEUC5)	6%	17%	64%	13%	2.84
6	I feel more confident to share my idea in a discussion through applications such as WhatsApp, zoom, and google meet than conventional class (PEUC6)	8%	31%	50%	11%	2.63
7	The instructions during online learning of speaking for discussion course are easy to understand (PEUC7)	9%	34%	54%	3%	2.52
8	I feel comfortable answering the questions during discussion given in online learning (PEUC8)	6%	32%	51%	11%	2.66
9	I think Speaking class in online learning is more fun than face-to-face (PEUC9)	15%	47%	30%	8%	2.31
10	I think Online speaking class easier than conventional class (PEUC10)	10%	40%	39%	11%	2.50

Total	91%	277%	448%	184%	27.25
Average	9%	28%	45%	18%	2.73
Total Average		37%		6 3%	2.73

From the table 3, it was obviously clear that the average of the Students' Perceptions of easy use and challenges faced of online learning in the Speaking for discussion course was 63 % of possitive responses (M=2.73). From the statements of Ease of use, most of the students responded that they have experience in using Learning applications such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and GoggleMeet in online speaking for discussion class and most of them know how to operate those applications. Moreover, the utilization of those applications supports their speaking skill improvement and easy to share ideas in online discussion. However, there are some challenges faced such as the problem of internet connection during class and the class was not fun as the traditional face-to-face class, so they stated that traditional class was easier than online class.

Table 4. The Percentage of Perceptions of Instructor/lecturer Characteristic

No	Items	Negative Perceptions		Positive Perceptions		Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
1	The Lecturer motivates me to be more active in speaking for discussion class (IC1)	6%	18%	60%	16%	2.85
2	The Lecturer gives me sufficient learning resources (IC2)	4%	18%	72%	6%	2.79
3	The lecturer encourages me to interact with him/her and my classmates (IC3)	6%	15%	62%	17%	2.90
4	The lecturer explains the material clearly (IC4)	5%	34%	52%	9%	2.64
5	The lecturer gives me enough time to do a task (IC5)	5%	19%	64%	12%	2.83
6	The lecturer gives plenty of time for turn-taking during discussion (IC6)	5%	14%	73%	8%	2.83
7	The lecturer gives quick feedback to questions during online speaking class (IC7)	9%	11%	63%	17%	2.90
	Total	40%	130%	445%	85%	19.76
	Average	6%	18%	64%	12%	2.82
	Total Average	24%		76%		2.82

From the table 4, it was clearly seen that the respondents gave a positive perception of lecturer characteristics during online class. The average responses indicated 64 % agreed and 12% strongly agreed with those statements. They agreed that the lecturer motivated them to be more active in online class discussions, gave them sufficient learning sources, and encourage them to interact with him and with classmates. In addition, the lecturer explained the material clearly, and gave enough time to do a task, and also plenty of time for turn-taking during discussion, Moreover, He gave quick feedback to questions during online class.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher discussed some important findings dealing with students' perceptions on online learning in speaking for discussion course gathered by distributed a set of questionnaire that consisted of 3 part which is perceptions of usefulness, perceptions of easy use and challenges faced, and lecturer characteristic.

The analysis of questionnaire part 1 about the perceptions of usefulness of online learning in speaking for discussion class showed that most of the students gave negative perceptions about usefulness statements. From the first statement of this part of questionnaire, the majority of the students strongly disagree that online learning helps them to understand the topic of discussion more easily. This finding in line with the previous research by Fitriani (2020) which stated that online learning did not help them easily in learning the materials. According to Fitriani (2020), in online learning sometimes students found it difficult or misunderstanding some of the material provide online. It is due to time limit and unstable internet connection that can influence students' understanding of the learning topic. It also can be of the possible reason why the students stated that online learning did not helps them to understand the topic of discussion more easily because of internet connection problem that they have experienced during online class as mentioned in item 3 of second part of the questionnaire.

However, students also stated that it is useful from some aspect. It is because online learning improved their confidence in expressing ideas and opinions in a group discussion, so that encourages them to be more active in a group discussion. This finding is supported by the previous study conducted by Rahman 2020, where stated that online learning fostered independence and improved self-confidence. Because in online classes when we want to express opinions in a discussion, we don't need to be seen directly by lecturers and classmates. Sometimes, face-to-face classes make students shy to share their ideas. So that online learning situations can increase students' self-confidence indirectly.

Besides, from the second part of the questionnaire about perceptions of easy use and challenge faced of online learning in speaking for discussion course, it can be seen that most of the students gave a positive response to statements given. The statements in this part are related to the technology used in online learning of speaking for discussion class. As seen in table 4.2, item PEUC1 indicated that students have experience in using learning applications such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and GoggleMeet in online speaking for discussion class, and most of them know how to operate those applications. The PEUC1 item indicates that students have experience in using learning applications such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and GoggleMeet in online speaking for discussion classes, and most of them know how to operate these applications. As we know, since the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak that hit the world, we are required to work from home. Where almost all of our daily activities involve technology such as ordering food, working, and teaching and learning activities, etc. This of course indirectly makes us proficient in using technology including applications used to support the teaching and learning process such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and GoggleMeet.

Moreover, the using of that applications support their speaking skill improvement and make it easier for them to share idea in online discussion. This finding is supported by the previous study (Zhong 2008, and Ahmadi 2018) that state the use of technology can improve students' independence and improve students' English skills because technology

offers so many benefits that can make teaching and learning proses more engaging and easier. Also, the use of those applications made them felt more confident to share their idea in a discussion and they felt more comfortable answering the question given in an online discussion because the instructions during online learning were easy to understand.

In addition, lecturers / Instructors have an important role in the success of the teaching and learning process, especially in a fully online system like today. In contrast to the previous two-part questionnaire which received multiple responses, the instructor's perceptions characteristics received stable responses from respondents. All items showed a positive response. Overall, respondents found their instructors to be motivating, encouraging, and facilitating. They agreed that lecturers motivated them to be more active in online class discussions, provided adequate learning resources, and encouraged them to interact with them and with classmates. In addition, the lecturer explained the material clearly, gave sufficient time to do the assignment, and had plenty of time to take turns during the discussion. In addition, he provided quick feedback for questions during the online class. In addition, to create a sense of social presence, instructors should develop interaction skills as moderators. This is intended to create a positive impression on the minds of students, build trust between teacher and students, increase student comfort during learning, and encourage their participation. All of the findings in this part of the questionnaire were in line with Rahman found in his study. He found that the students like the characteristic of the lecturer during online learning. According to Mustomi (2018), there is characteristic of lecturers that students like so that they can increase their learning motivation, lecturers who have the ability to convey material that is easily understood by their students. This can happen if the lecturer is very good at the material being taught or the lecturer is even humorous. This can also be one of the reasons why students give a positive perception of the lecturer who teaches speaking for discussion class because the lecturer who teaches this course is a lecturer who is very professional and experienced in this field.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

From the result above, it can be concluded that online learning in speaking for discussion course was good to use during the pandemic situation because it is easy to use and helps them to interact with the lecturer and also their classmate during online speaking for discussion class even though not really useful to helps them improving their speaking skill.

Suggestion

Because the result of this study indicates good perceptions on online learning of speaking for discussion course, the researcher suggests maintaining the use of online learning in speaking for discussion course during the pandemic situation. Also, would like to give some suggestion for English lecturer, especially who teaches an online speaking class to motivated the students to be more active in an online discussion, and also make a good material and explain it more clearly so that the students can understand easily.

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