Teachers' Perception in Using a Blended Learning Method to Teach Listening Skill in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

In COVID-19 19 Pandemic, teachers have to be able to find the suitable learning methods to be used in teaching the students, especially in teaching listening skill. One of the contextu al methods is the blended learning method. Blended learning is the combination between traditional (face-to-face) learning and online learning. The main problem of the recent study is what is the teachers' perception in using a blended learning to teach listening skill in EFL classroom. So, the research aimed at finding the teachers' perception, their weaknesses and strengths in using blended learning method to teach listening skill in EFL classroom. This study employs a descriptive qualitative as a method. The participants of the study were two English teachers at one of vocational school in Cirebon. The data were collected through semi-structured interview to gain relevant data. The result of the research showed that in teachers' perception; Teaching listening using online learning methods and blended learning is something new for both teachers and students. Several obstacles occurred, not only from difficulties in adapting to technology, several obstacles also emerged from various sides such as from student interest in learning and inadequate facilities for teachers. However, the use of blended learning is very helpful for teachers in teaching, especially in teaching listening during this pandemic, even though it is not optimal.

Keywords: *Teachers' Perception; Blended Learning; Teaching Listening*

INTRODUCTION

In 21st century, technological developments have developed very rapidly and have a significant impact on the world of education. The advancements of technology and communication have changed people's lifestyles a lot, be it in work, play, socializing and even studying. According to Galang (2017), entering the 21st century technology has eevolved into various aspects of life including in the field of education. Teachers and students, lecturers and students, educators and students are required to have teaching and learning abilities in this 21st century. A number of challenges and opportunities must be faced by students and teachers in order to survive in the knowledge century in this information era.

In Indonesia, the use of technology in educational world has started to develop rapidly particularly in this Covid-19 pandemic. The development of

educational technology is the most important factor in solving learning problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational technology can provide a lot of convenience and facilitate information and delivery of material hence teaching and learning activities can still be carried out even with the concept of distance learning.

Technology is closely related to education particularly in this pandemic era. In other words, amidst this Covid-19 pandemic the world of education utilizes technology in more optimum way in the teaching and learning process. This pandemic seems to force us to be ready for a more advanced digital era. The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia has adjusted face-to-face learning activities into online learning. Teachers have to be able to find suitable learning methods to be used in this pandemic. One of the contextual methods is the blended learning method.

Blended learning assumes the continued use of face-to-face teaching as a basic building block of the learning experience, enriched and enhanced by the integration of the internet and other teaching and learning technologies into studies undertaken both in and out of the classroom (Marsh, 2012). Blended learning has been popular in language learning and teaching methodology due to facts that this digital era makes both possible students and teachers to access online source easily. Blended learning or mixed learning is a concept that refers to the blending of traditional (physical) learning methods and new learning methods based on e-learning.

In recent years, blended learning has gained considerable popularity in training and education and in higher education in particular (Elisabeta, Gheorghe & Florentina 2018). According to Istianah (2017), blended learning is believed to improve students' understanding in learning second language. The employment of offline and online activities is expected to give better outcome than the traditional face-to-face activities. However, in the real situation the transformation from face-to-face learning to blended learning is certainly not optimal, especially in the listening skills section. In face-to-face learning, students find themselves difficult to learn English and this situation is getting more complicated when it is implemented online. Students will find it increasingly difficult and vulnerable. Besides, they feel reluctant to learn more deeply if the teacher does not supervise directly.

Listening is the most important language skill and also a part of communication. Through listening, we can share our ideas with other people (Hidayat, 2013). According to Dadang and Pita (2014), listening is the language skill used most in life, needs to be a central focus-all day, every day-limited only

by the availability of the target language in the school, the community, and the media.

Adnan (2015) states that listening skill has been a "Cinderella" for years. Many studies show that most teachers pay no attention to listening skills. They tried to skip teaching listening for many reasons such as lack of teaching materials and teaching facilities. Meanwhile, According to Harmer (2000), most students want to be able to understand what people are saying to them in English, either face-to-face, on TV, cinema, etc.

Listening skill is the forgotten skill. It seems that, for a long time, the skill of listening didn't receive adequate acknowledgement as a skill in its own right, but rather was long "regarded as a passive skill and an ability that would develop without assistance" (Walker, 2014). The statement above describe that listening skill is not only difficult to learn but also difficult to teach.

There were several studies concerning the used of blended learning. As explained in the aforementioned explanation, the study concerning teacher's perception conducted towards blended learning in listening skill is still rarely conducted. The first research was conducted by Mubarok (2015). The result of the study is Blended learning model could improve students' comprehension in Listening class. Students had positive view toward the implementation of Blended Learning model in Listening class. Similar research also conducted by Arina (2017). The research focuses on students' achievement in grammar class using blended learning method. They are focuses on A pre-experimental research by comparing the means of the participants' scores in both pre-test and post-test. My study and previous research together examined blended learning method. What distinguishes my study from previous research is in terms of language skills and the subject research. Previous research examines grammar skills, while my study examines listening skill. Previous research analysis from students' perception, while my study analysis from teachers' perception.

According to the researcher's experience at one of Vocational High School in Cirebon, blended learning is a new method that teachers have begun to apply during this pandemic. Several obstacles were seen, such as adjustments that teachers made to use several online learning applications, some teachers had difficulty in teaching listening using online methods, even when using mixed learning such as the blended learning method.

This study aims to describe the teacher's perception using blended learning method, their strategies and difficulties in using blended learning method to teach listening skill at senior high school.

Based on the background above, the researcher is interested in doing this research in order to analyze teacher's perception using blended learning method

to teach listening skill in one private university in Cirebon. This research employs a qualitative research by using descriptive qualitative design as the method to investigate the teacher's perceptions.

1. Perception

Perception (from the Latin *perceptio*, meaning gathering or receiving) is the organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the presented information or environment (Wikipedia, 2021). Perception is a belief of opinion, often held by many people and based on how thing seem (Cambridge Dictionary). Based on Meriam-Webster dictionary, Perception is a mental image: CONCEPT. Perception is the way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression. In addition, (Talis, 2018) Perception is the process through which the information from outside environment is selected, received, organized and interpreted to make it meaningful to people.

According to Talis (2018), the nature of perception refers to the interpretation of sensory data. In other words, sensation involved detecting the presence of a stimulus whereas perception involved understanding what the stimulus means. For example, when we saw something, the visual stimulus was the light energy reflected from the external world and the eye becomes the sensor.

2. Concept of Blended Learning

In language, Blended Learning consists of two words, namely Blended and Learning. The word Blend means mixture and Learning means learning. Blended learning or mixed learning is a concept that refers to the blending of traditional (physical) learning methods and new learning methods based on e-learning (e-learning, m-learning). The concept behind blended learning was first developed in the 1960s. One of the earliest uses of the term appeared in a 1999 press release, during which the Center for Interactive Learning, an education business based in Atlanta, announced a name change to EPIC Learning (Siregar, 2020). There are many experts who try to define Blended Learning.

Talis (2018) define that Blended learning is an education program formal or informal that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods. The methodology behind blended learning is to combine classroom learning with mobile learning and online learning, it also has different names like mixed learning, hybrid learning, blended e-learning, melted learning, etc (Talis, 2018).

According to Bullen and Alltree (2006: 4), blended learning is an "educational provision where high quality e-learning opportunities and excellent campus-based learning are combined or blended in coherent, reflective and innovative ways so that learning is enhanced and choice is increased".

Al Fiky (2011: 21-22) describes blended learning as a whole compact system that blends traditional learning style (face-to-face) with web-based elearning to direct and help the learner during each learning stage as one of the modern approaches based on the use of education technology in designing new educational situations. Blended learning is one of the teacher's arts to combine between varied resources and activities within learning environments that enables learners to interact and construct ideas (Harb, 2013).

Blended learning represents a new approach and mix of classroom and online activities consistent with the goals of specific courses or programs (Garrison & Vaughan, 2007). Blended learning is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure of, and approach to, teaching and learning as stated by (Garrison & Vaughan, 2007):

1. Thoughtfully integrating face-to-face and online learning
2. Fundamentally rethinking the course design to optimize students engagement
3. Restructuring and replacing traditional class contact hours

Santosh (2013) in Talis (2018) explain that the reasons for choosing a blended model generally dictate which of the six (6) forms of BL:

1. Face-to-face Driver is a blended learning model in which lecture deliver most of the curriculum. Lecture lead the class in a lecture following an established protocol taking precedence and technology being a secondary thought. However, they also produce online resources to supplement or revise course material which students can study at home, in the classroom or in a technology lab.
2. Rotation model of blended learning: within a given course, a student rotates on a fixed schedule between learning online in a one-toone, self-paced environment and sitting in a classroom with a traditional face-to-face teacher.
3. Flex model of blended learning features an online platform that delivers most of the curricula. It's the model where most of the learning is done online and the face-to-face model exists to provide onsite support for a flexible and adaptive, as required basis through inperson tutoring sessions and small group sessions.
4. Online Lab was a model of blended learning that characterizes programs that rely on an online platform to deliver the entire course but in a brick-and-mortar lab environment. The entire course and teaching are done online. Lecture interact with students through prerecorded videos, audio and video conferences or discussion forums and email.
5. Self-Blend model is a fully individualized approach that allows students to choose to take one or more courses online to supplement their traditional school's catalog. Maximum part of the learning is done online, but the student will still attend face-to-face classes.

6. Online Driver involves online platform as well as lecture to deliver the curricula. Students work from remote locations most of the time and come to school for optional or required face-to-face classes.

In describing the blended learning ingredients, Carman (2005: 2) in (Harb, 2013) has pointed out that the blended learning process includes five key ingredients:

1. Live Events: Synchronous, instructor-led learning events in which all learners participate at the same time. For many learners, nothing can replace the ability to tap the expertise of a live instructor. 39

2. Online Content: Learning experiences that the learner completes individually, at his own speed and on his own time. Self-paced, asynchronous learning events add significant value to the blended learning equation. In order to get maximum value–real business results–from a self-paced learning offering, it must be based on effective implementation of instructional design principles.

3. Collaboration: Learners communicate and create with others. E-mail, threaded discussions, and wikis are all examples.

4. Assessment: A measure of learners" knowledge. Pre-assessments can come before live or self-paced events to determine prior knowledge, and postassessments can occur following scheduled or online learning events to measure learning transfer. Assessment is not limited to conventional tests, quizzes, and grades. Narrative feedback, portfolio evaluations and, importantly, a designer"s reflection about a blended learning environment"s effectiveness or usefulness are all forms of assessment. Assessment is one of the most critical ingredients of blended learning, for two reasons: 1) It enables learners to "test out" of content they already know, fine-tuning their own blended learning experience. 2) It measures the effectiveness of all other learning modalities and events.

5. Support Materials: These include reference materials both physical and virtual that enhance learning retention and transfer. They include: printable references, job aids and personal digital assistant.

3. *Listening*

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning (Howatt and Dakin, 1994).

Listening can be defined as the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening becomes a key to all effective communication (Mubarok, 2015). Listening comprehension is the process of understanding speech in first or second language. The study of listening comprehension in second language learning focuses on the role of individual linguistic unit (e.g. phonemes, words, grammatical structure) as well as the role of

the listener's expectatation, the situation and context, background knowledge and topic (Riski Hanifa, 2017).

According to Cahyono & Widiati (2009), listening is naturally considered as the primary skill in the acquisition of the native (first) language. Listening is important since it provides the language input (Rost, 1994:141). According to Brown (2008), various listening inputs from outside world that go through the human ears will be caught by the sensory memory. A new-born baby will first listen to the voices and sounds in his/her environment in order to internalize linguistic input, before he/she speaks and learns to read and write (Cahyono & Widianti, 2009).

Listening is the most important language skill and also a part of communication through listening we can share our ideas with other people (Hidayat, 2013). Listening skill is often considered the most difficult skill. This is because teachers often prioritize learning reading, writing and speaking. Meanwhile, According to Dadang and Pita (2014) Listening is the language skill used most in life, needs to be a central focus-all day, every day-limited only by the availability of the target language in the school, the community, and the media. Listening, unfortunately, is often regarded as a passive skill although it requires the listener's complete involvement as an active process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of what they hear and associate it with existing knowledge (Ozgur Yildirim, 2015).

According to Carter & Nunan (2001) citied (Mubarok, 2015), listening becomes a channel in which students process language in real time – employing pacing, units of encoding and pausing that are unique to spoken language). Teaching listening involves the selection of input sources, the chunking of input into segments for presentation, and an activity cycle for learners to engage in.

METHOD
A. Research Design

According to Creswell (2012), research design is a pattern that followed by the researcher for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. In selecting research design, the researcher should consider what and how the data should be gathered and analyze. Based on the title, the researcher employs Qualitative Descriptive method as design method because it is comparable to collect the data from the teacher's perception. In this study, the data about the teachers' perception using blended learning method to teach listening skill in EFL classroom is explained descriptively.

B. **Research Site and Participant**

This research took place at one of the private university at Cirebon. The participant of the research is three of English teachers who teaches Listening Skill Subject at one of the vocational hight school at Cirebon.

C. **Data Collecting Procedure**

For data collection, the researcher used interview as instruments. The researcher interview the lecturers who used blended learning as teaching method in that class to know their perception about blended learning.

D. **Data Analysis Technique**

The data collected using interview and analyzed qualitatively using Miles and Huberman techniques of analyzing data: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

a. *Data Reduction*

The first step was data reduction. According to Miles (1994), data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data in written up field note or transcript. Data reduction was a process of sharpening, classifying, directing, removing and organizing the data in such a way to take a final data conclusion.

b. *Data Display*

The second step was data display. According to Miles (1994), generally a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. The data displayed as organize information descriptively in order to draw the data conclusion.

c. *Conclusion Drawing*

After finished doing data reduction and data display, the last steps to analyzed the data in this research was drawing conclusion. According to Miles (1994), final conclusion may not appear until data collection is over, depending on the size of the corpus of field notes; coding storage and retrieval methods of the funding agency, but they often have been prefigured from the beginning even when a researcher claims to have been proceeding inductively.

In concluding the data, the researcher used the result of data analysis to answer the research problem of the study. The results were described based on the teachers' perception about the use of blended learning method to teach listening skill in EFL Classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To complete this study properly, it is necessary to analyse the data collected in order to answer the research questions. As already indicated in the preceding

chapter, data is interpreted in a descriptive form. The findings of the study were discussed bellow.

The researcher found out the teacher's perception in using a blended learning method to teach listening skill and got some additional and supporting information about the research questions by conducting the interview.

This section will explain the findings of two research objectives. The first finding derived from semi-structured interview to explain teachers' perception in using a blended learning method to teach listening skill. The second finding also derived from semi-structured interview, but to explain teachers' problems in using a blended learning method to teach listening skill.

A. Teachers' Perception in Using a Blended Learning Method to Teach Listening Skill.

Q : *"Menurut pendapat Anda, apakah metode blended learning sangat dibutuhkan guru dalam mengajar listening saat terjadi pandemi?"*

According to your opinion, do you think that the blended learning method highly needed by teacher in teaching listening during pandemic?

AW 1: *"Iya . karena metode blended learning sangat membantu proses pembelajaran. Karena kegiatan pembelajaran listening secara daring masih belum maksimal untuk diterapkan. Dengan adanya metode ini, mempermudah saya untuk mengevaluasi pembelajaran dari online dan offline, juga mempermudah siswa untuk memahami materi yang saya ajarkan."*

("Yes. because the blended learning method really helps the learning process. Because online listening learning activities are still not optimal to be applied. With this method, it makes it easier for me to evaluate online and offline learning, it also makes it easier for students to understand the material I teach.")

AW 2: *"Ya, dibutuhkan. Karena kan persiapan, jadi misalnya pas online itu kita berikan materi-materinya nanti untuk konfirmasi kejelasan dia bisa atau tidaknya atau penambahan-penambahan informasi atau stimulus yang lainnya disaat offline diberikan."*

("Yes, needed. Because it's preparation, for example, when we go online, we will provide the materials later to confirm the clarity of whether he can or not or additional information or other stimuli when offline are given.")

AW 3 : *"Betul, metode ini diperlukan dalam pembelajaran listening yang diusung kita selama masa pandemi, dimana*

pembelajaran tidak selalu dilakukan secara tatap muka, melainkan secara online menggunakan teknologi dan jaringan internet. Guru akan memberikan topik-topik yang berkaitan dengan materi, baik itu berupa video, dokumen, suara, yang kemudian dianalisis oleh siswa, kemudian akan dilakukan analisis dari siswa pada hari atau waktu yang berbeda."

("It's true, this method is needed in listening learning that is carried us during the pandemic, where learning is not always done face-to-face, but online using technology and internet networks. The teacher will provide topics related to the material, whether in the form of videos, documents, sounds, which are then analyzed by students, then analysis will be carried out from students on different days or times.")

From the question, the researcher found that blended learning is one of the suitable method to be used in teaching listening in this pandemic. According to Priscila (2020), It's not easy to switch to a new method if you are already accustomed to a traditional approach. So, it is very natural that some teachers still have difficulty in teaching online even though they have been assisted by the blended learning method. Meanwhile, Blended learning is one of the solutions to learning problems in this pandemic era. The combination of online and offline learning can make it easier for teachers and students to convey and receive material properly. Blended learning can help the teacher to teach listening skill in the pandemic situation. Because this method can convey listening learning in the midst of teacher limitations in carrying out learning during the pandemic. The teacher can provide the material first through online, then the teacher will validate students' understanding during offline learning.

Teachers feel that blended learning is the right method to teach listening skills. Because blended learning is a combination of online and offline learning. Some problems often occur and teachers also have to adapt to the development of this technology. There are so many new things that teachers and students can learn from this method. From learning using online methods only, to the existence of this blended learning method. Teachers also find it easier to carry out learning activities using this blended learning method.

With the application of this method, teachers feel helped and find it easier to deliver listening material. Because this method can convey listening learning in the midst of teacher limitations in carrying out learning during the pandemic. The teacher can provide the material first

through online, then the teacher will validate students' understanding during offline learning. One example of learning activities that teachers applied that teachers provide listening materials and materials online, students could access various supporting materials from various sources, so that students could independently seek and gain a lot of knowledge from various sources. Then the teacher would validate the students' understanding at offline schedule, the teacher would re-explained what the students don't understand. This is certainly very helpful in the learning process during this pandemic.

B. Teachers' Problem in Using a Blended Learning Method to Teach Listening Skill

Q : *"Apa tantangan Anda dalam menerapkan metode pembelajaran campuran untuk mengajarkan keterampilan mendengarkan di Kelas EFL selama pandemi ini?"*

("What is your challenges in applying blended learning methods to teach a listening skills in EFL Classroom during this pandemic?")

AW 1 : *"Akses internet dan kesiapam siswa serta kualitas guru. Selain itu metode belajar campur dapat menjadi langkah awal menuju sistem pendidkan berbasis teknologi. Pendidik merasa kaget karena harus mengubah sistem silabus dan proses belajar secara cepat. Siswa sulit mengerjakan tugas yang menumpuk .sementara orang tua merasa setres ketika mendampingi anaknya belajar"*

("Internet access and students readiness and teachers quality. In addition, the mixed learning method can be the first step towards a technology-based education system. Educators feel shocked because they have to change the syllabus system and the learning process quickly. Students find it difficult to do piling up tasks. While parents feel stressed when accompanying their children to study")

AW 2 : *"Ada, pastinya. Karena misalnya kaya kemarin saya memberikan materi music itu ada yang menyimak, ada yang enggak. Kan gatau, maksudnya gatau udah tahap mana mereka itu. Apakah dianggurkan aja materi yang sudah diberi atau Cuma sekedar ditulis tanpa memahami. Memang itu kan tergantung minatnya anak. Kalau offline kan kita bisa membacanya berulang, sedangkan online saya gabisa terlalu mengontrol dengan baik karena gimana ya, namanya juga jarak jauh."*

("Yes. For example, yesterday, when I gave music material, some people listened, some didn't. I don't know, I mean I don't know what stage they are at. Is it just that the material that has been given is idle or is it just written without understanding. It really depends on the interests of the child. If we are offline, we can do it repeatedly, while online I can't control it properly because how come, the name is also remote.")

AW 3 : *"Tantangan yang saya hadapi ketika mengajar listening menggunakan metode blended learning adalah saya tidak dapat memantau siswa secara langsung, dan juga membutuhkan lebih banyak waktu untuk membiarkan siswa menganalisis dari berbagai sumber lain. Siswa juga mengeluh dan membuat alasan tentang terbatasnya jaringan internet yang memungkinkan mereka bolos belajar. Demikian juga, terkadang saya merasa masih perlu meningkatkan keterampilan saya untuk membuat pembelajaran lebih menarik dan menyenangkan bagi siswa."*

("The challenge I faced when teaching listening using the blended learning method was that I was unable to monitor students directly, and also needed more time to let students analyze from various other sources. Students also complain and make excuses about the limited internet network that allows them to miss learning. Likewise, sometimes I feel I still need to improve my skills to make learning more interesting and fun for students.")

From the first question, the researcher found that some of the challenges in implementing listening learning using the blended learning method are internet access and students' readiness for online learning. When learning online, teachers cannot control their students directly, it makes it difficult for teachers to know students' understanding of the material provided. The existence of blended learning is indeed helpful, because teachers can validate students' understanding during face-to-face learning, but it is still not optimal due to time constraints.

Some of the challenges in implementing listening learning using the blended learning method are internet access and students' readiness for online learning. When learning online, teachers cannot control their students directly, it made it difficult for teachers to make sure students really understand the material or not, teachers also have difficulty checking student assignments, because learning time feels like 24 hours. The other

challenges is the school facilities were not adequate to carry out teaching and learning activities optimally.

Students understanding tends to be lacking, because students have a different sense of responsibility, some felt enthusiastic and learn and did assignments well, some didn't care and don't do assignments because of the lack of direct teacher supervision when learning uses online. During learning using blended learning, students understand the material no better than face-to-face learning as before but students tend to find it easier to understand when using blended learning than only used online learning. Blended learning method is quite helpful in achieving the learning objectives, although it is not perfect.

CONCLUSION

After conducting research and analyzing the research of teachers' perception in using a blended learning method to teach listening skill in EFL classroom, it could be concluded that:

A. Listening is an important skill to learn, even though it is not as popular as other skills such as speaking and writing. Some teachers said that Some of the factors that cause most teachers not to teach listening to their students are because; it is felt that students lack mastery of English vocabulary, the limitations of existing facilities, most teachers are more concerned with learning grammar and speaking, seeing the limitations of time and other material achievement targets.

B. Blended learning is an appropriate method to be used in teaching listening during this pandemic. Teachers also have a good perception of this method. There are many benefits that can be obtained from using this method, although it has not run optimally, but it is enough to help achieve the learning objectives in the classroom. Not only teachers, this method also makes it easier for students to learn listening during this pandemic.

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