

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents an overview on the topic investigated. There are six components in this chapter. The background of the research explains the overview of the topic. In addition, the problems investigated in this study are elaborated in the statement of the problem. Then, the specific problems investigated in this topic will be explained in delimitation of the problem. Meanwhile, the research questions and objectives of the research, explain the focus of this research. The significance of the research explains the benefits of this study to several people and institutions.

Background of the Research

Due to the rapid development of technology, every aspect of human being is integrated with a network connection including educational aspect. In fact, network connection can increasingly facilitate the interaction between teacher, students, and parents during the learning process (Greenhow, & Askari, 2017). Besides, Saura, Reyes-Menendez, & Palos-Sanchez, (2019) revealed in their study that the students can discuss deeply about some specific topics related to education through social network such as Twitter. It concludes that the innovations of teaching method toward the use of network connection have developed over the last decade.

One of the teaching innovations is e-learning. Basak, Wotto & Be'linger (2018) stated in their study that e-learning is an approach consisting of several aspects such as self-paced training, many of the virtual events, mentoring, simulation, collaboration, assessment, competency road map, authoring tools, e-store, and the learning management system which focuses on the individual learner. Another definition of e-learning also stated by Rahmawati, (2016) "e-learning could be defined as any use of Web and Internet technologies to create learning experiences" (p.3). Therefore, in this digital era e-learning approach is a new breakthrough that is commonly implemented in teaching and learning process focusing on individual learning experience. Furthermore, it is proven by some experts who investigate the use of e-learning approach.

Most of experts were interested in investigating e-learning, including its benefits and challenges. According to Jethro, Grace & Thomas, (2012) e-learning approach becomes a popular approach because of it provides flexibility, efficiency, and effectiveness. Jethro, et al also argued that e-learning is one of educational revolutions which changes every system happened in face-to-face instruction. In addition, Rahmawati (2016) found that flexibility and updated information are two major benefits during the implementation of e-learning in English for Foreign Language (EFL) context. On the other hand, e-learning also have several challenges. One of the studies conducted by Tarus, Gichoya, & Muumbo, (2015) revealed that several challenges appeared during the implementation of e-learning in some Kenya's public universities. They were unsupported facilities and infrastructure, financial problem, lack of teachers'

technical skill, lack of interest among the teachers, and amount of time required. Another study revealed that technological and technical training problems were the things that should be considered, in order to be able to succeed the implementation of e-Learning (Islam, Beer, & Slack, 2015).

During its implementation in teaching and learning process, e-learning has developed into several approaches, such as blended learning and web-based learning. Furthermore, one of the approaches that has been commonly implemented in some educational institution is blended learning. Banditvillai (2016) stated that blended learning approach is the combination between face-to-face learning and online learning. Banditvillai added the main role of online learning in this study is that, to be additional support to give the example and material to the students, in order they can get a deep understanding related to the material. Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal (2004) in Thang, Wong, Noor, Mustaffa, Mahmud, & Ismail, (2012) also stated that Blended learning is an instructional approach that merges between conventional classroom and online learning. Kırkgöz (2011) also stated that blended learning is an approach where face-to-face and online meeting are merged during teaching and learning process. In his study Kırkgöz stated that during the implementation of blended learning there should be a correlation between face-to-face meetings and online meetings. Therefore, it can be concluded that blended learning approach is an approach combining between face-to-face meetings and online meeting that should be implemented equally.

Blended learning have become popular approach implemented in some majors of higher education, including English language education. In EFL

context, blended learning is used by the teachers to develop students' language skills. Al Zumor, Al Refaai, Eddin, & Al-Rahman, (2013) stated that blended learning can really improve students' language skill, especially reading comprehension and vocabulary enrichment. Another study conducted by Banditvillai (2016) emphasized that students are able to increase their language learning through blended environment. The skills improved through online learning in this study were writing and reading. In addition, according to Thang et.al, (2012) grammar, writing, and reading are the skills that potentially can be improved through the implementation of blended learning. Hence, the implementation of blended learning affects to language skills improvement. Based on some previous studies revealed that reading and writing are the most possible skills enhanced through blended learning approach.

However, some studies also reveal that in EFL context blended learning could not improve all four languages skill. One of the studies showed that speaking are the low-rated skills to be enhanced through blended learning than the other skills (Banditvillai, 2016). Furthermore, Banditvillai added that, reading and writing are the skills which might have a big opportunity to be improved through blended learning approach. Another study done by Al-Zumor et.al, (2013) stated that, there are fewer interactive tools which can improve speaking skills in some Learning Management System (LMS). Therefore, in Al-Zumor et.al study, pronunciation and speaking are the low-rated skills to be improved during the implementation of blended learning. Besides, in Thang et.al, (2012) study revealed that, the students did not feel a significant improvement of listening and

speaking skills through blended learning approach. From the overview above, some researchers find out that listening and speaking could not significantly be improved through blended learning approach.

In fact, based on the researcher's bachelor degree experience of studying in English Language Education Department at one of Islamic private university in Yogyakarta, the researcher found that through the implementation of blended learning the researcher feels significant improvement of his listening and speaking skill. Besides, according to the researcher observation some of students also experienced several interesting activities related to listening and speaking skills which was really worth to be conducted through blended learning approach. It is also because of the university that has fully supported the implementation of blended learning during teaching and learning process by creating an LMS modified from Moodle and a policy in conducting blended learning approach which is 40% online and 60% face to face of the whole semester.

Based on the overview of some studies and facts above, it shows that some of experts found that listening and speaking are the low-rated skills to be enhanced through blended learning approach. Meanwhile, according to researcher experiences and observation the implementation of blended learning can significantly improve students' listening and speaking skills. Therefore, to examine these problems and prove the researchers' opinion related to students' language skill through blended learning comprehensively, the researcher would like to investigate the students' perspective on the implementation of blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skills. The researcher would

like to find out how the students feel when they learn listening and speaking skills through blended learning.

To conclude, blended learning is a phenomenon happened in this era which has been implemented in several educational institution. Therefore, the researcher would like to dig out how the students experienced towards the implementation of blended learning. This research is worth to be conducted, as there was a contradictory statement between the previous studies and the researcher's opinion based on observations and experiences which will result some new perspectives from the students related to the implementation of blended learning in learning listening and speaking skills.

Statement of the Problem

Blended learning is an effective and suitable approach to be implemented in this digital era. This approach combines between face-to-face meeting and online meeting. There are several conditions that might make this approach to be implemented ideally. First of all, the allocation between online meeting and face-to-face meeting should be divided equally. Then, the activities both in online and face-to-face meetings should be related each other. Third, students and teachers should have good computer skills. The last, institution should organize the server and also LMS very well. Therefore, blended learning approach may run very well if those four factors are online there are met.

However, based on the research context conducted by the researcher, there are several problems appear during the implementation of blended learning. The

researcher still found that some of blended learning approaches did not implemented equally. Even though there has been a policy that online meeting should be conducted 40%, yet there were some teachers conduct online meeting more than what has been set. Then, based on some students and researcher's observation showed that some teachers are still less competence in managing Learning Management System (LMS) especially regarding to designing a good learning course in the LMS. Furthermore, it affects to the activities implemented during blended learning approach. The activities could not be interesting for the students and the instruction was not explained well. Besides, the materials are also not arranged well in LMS. In addition, the researcher also experiences some difficulties in using the LMS, some of activities are too many and complicated. Besides, there are still several challenges faced by the researcher during blended learning implementation.

According to the problems above, there are several aspects that can be investigated in this study related to the students' perception on the use blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skills. The aspects include challenges, benefits, activities, preparation, and skills. However, because of the time limitation, the researcher will not investigate all the aspects above.

Delimitation of the Problem

Based on the problems occur in blended learning implementation above, there are two major problems investigated in this study. The researcher would like to investigate students' perception on the challenges and suitable activities during

the implementation of blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skills. The focus problems of this study are challenges and activities.

The reason why the researcher chooses challenges as the object problem is that the researcher would like to explore more about the challenges faced by the students specifically related to learning listening and speaking skills through blended learning; as on the previous observation and experience the researcher only found the challenges of blended learning implementation in general. For the activity, the researcher assumes that activity is the key to the success of the implementation of blended learning. Therefore, the researcher would like to explore about the suitable activity conducted in learning listening and speaking skills according to students' perspective. Furthermore, the researcher decides to choose these problems to be researched in this study.

Research Question

1. How do the English Language Education Department students perceive the challenges of the implementation of blended learning in listening and speaking course?
2. What are the suitable activities in listening and speaking course through blended learning as perceived by the English Language Education Department students?

Objective of the Research

1. To investigate the English Language Education Department students' perspective on the challenges of the implementation of blended learning in listening and speaking course.
2. To investigate the suitable activities in listening and speaking course through blended learning as perceived by the English Language Education Department students.

Significance of the Research

This research is expected to give some advantages for the teachers, the students, the institution, and the other researcher as well. The elaborations are as follows:

For teachers. This research can give some considerations to anticipate some challenges faced during the implementation of blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skill. This research also can be a suggestion for the teachers to conduct a suitable activity through blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skills.

For students. This research can give knowledge about the implementation of blended learning to the students. Also, by understanding the challenges faced, the students can be ready before the implementation of blended learning approach in learning listening and speaking skills. By knowing the suitable activities, the students can predict what they are going to do in listening and speaking class through blended learning.

For the other researchers. This research can be an important overview towards blended learning in teaching listening and speaking course. It also can be a reference for the next researchers if they would like to investigate Blended learning with the different place, methods and also participants.