

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter consists of six sub-chapters. They are the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the research questions, the objectives the study and the significance of the study. The background of the study presents the brief review of the previous related studies. The statement of the problem delivers about the current condition of the research topic, the things and aspects those are possible to be researched. The delimitation of the problem makes the study more focus on particular aspects. The research questions and the objectives are the focus of the research. The last, significances of the study are the expectation of the research that potentially utilized in the future. The explanation of the study would be presented as clear as possible.

Background of the Study

Listening and speaking as two of four basic language proficiencies for communication are related to each other. Besides reading and writing, those proficiencies are required when people learn and master a specific language (Nazara, 2011; Tyagi, 2013). Furthermore, listening and speaking proficiencies are a pair. Listening is for gaining the input (Cordova & Dechsubha, 2018) and speaking is for producing the output (Putra, 2016; Mega, 2018). The nature of learning the language supports this fact; who wants to learn a specific language should enrich the exposure of listening material in the early phase as a gateway to speak (Povey, 2016). Hence, it shows that listening and speaking skills relate to each other in the language learning process.

The blended learning method comes recently as innovation, especially to make teaching listening and speaking proficiencies effective. Several studies showed positive attitudes of students during the implementation of blended learning methods (Hung, 2015; Ahmad, 2016; Cordova & Dechsubha, 2018; Ginaya, Rejeki & Astuti, 2018) and, in this case, improvement in listening proficiency (Cordova & Dechsubha, 2018) and speaking proficiency (Ginaya, et.al., 2018). Hence, blended learning has a bright future to be developed.

Despite the positive result of blended learning in several previous studies, some studies showed on the contrary. From the students' standpoint, a study conducted by Hung (2015) showed one-third of the students who had experiences in using blended learning methods on their English learning activities. Another study conducted by Ahmad (2016) showed that most of the students were still not familiar with the blended learning method implemented in a course. Those are the responsibility of the teachers to maximize the potential of blended learning.

Introducing blended learning to people is also challenging for the teachers. Some studies mentioned the lack of teachers' preparation when conducting this new method in the course. In a study conducted by Jeffrey, Milne, Suddaby, and Higgins (2014), some experienced teachers were lack of preparation and ability to use technology and Learning Management System (LMS). This situation made the students feel confused and have difficulties in understanding the instruction or doing the assignment. Furthermore, if the teacher has a bad attitude and also does not understand how to teach using blended learning, the potential of blended learning will not be able to be shown. Moreover, Jeffrey, et

al. (2014) proved in their study that only one of nine teachers invited in the research could take advantage of online aspects in the blended learning method. A participant admitted that he was an old fashioned, and also felt that only can teach in better form if he taught in the classroom than in the distance using technology. In another case, several teachers still cannot use all potential of technology. They used the learning platform only to store material (Bueno-Alastuey & López Pérez, 2014).

In EFL context, the research about listening and speaking courses using blended learning is limited. A previous study conducted in Ecuador about listening and speaking activities invited mostly the students and some teachers in a senior highschool (Gonzalez, Ochoa, Cabrera, Castillo, Quinonez, Solano, Espinosa, Ulehlova & Arias, 2015). The study revealed the frequency of several learning activities and limited explanation about the selecting factors of learning activities. Therefore, the researcher believes that this research is worth to be conducted and will give new understandings about the learning activities and selecting factors of learning activities based on EFL teachers' experiences in teaching listening and speaking courses using the blended learning methods in university level that occurred in the EFL context, specifically in Indonesia.

The Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, many learning methods are available to be adopted by teachers. Blended learning as one of the learning methods comes with solutions and challenges for the teachers. The methods and the way of learning that implemented all this time need to adjust to get all benefits and potential.

Many learning activities for enhancing listening and speaking proficiencies are available to obtain the learning objectives. The teachers should wisely decide what kind of activities should be included in listening and speaking courses. The teachers have to plan and implement in-class and out-class activities using technology when using the blended learning methods. The teacher is the person in charge of all things in the course, and even the teacher also estimates the result of the learning target (Wang, Sun & Shi, 2018). Arteaga and Rodas (2018) mentioned that, at the same time, the teachers who apply blended learning as their teaching method should have good technical ability besides only think about learning objectives. It could be challenging for the teachers who want to adopt or adapt the method, but they are still insufficient in using technology.

Several factors should be considered in choosing in-class and out-class activities for listening and speaking courses. Richards (2008) and Tang (2013) stated that listening and speaking are real-time activities. The students should learn how to process the input simultaneously while the listening activities sometimes have no repetition. Besides, while in speaking activities, the students also learn how to respond to what they listen to simultaneously. Hence, the teachers should wisely consider the in-class activities and out-class learning activities to accommodate learning objectives.

The researcher is a language education student in a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta that has set to launch a policy about implementing the blended learning method in the teaching activities since 2018 for all courses, including listening and speaking courses. The rules strongly suggest that the

lecturer conduct, at the most, 40% of whole meetings of learning activities through the Learning Management System (LMS) developed by the university. Specifically, the researcher's major, English Language Education Department (ELED), has implemented blended learning through the LMS (<https://myclass.umy.ac.id/lang>) officially since 2018. It concludes that it is more than enough time for the researcher, also as a student, to face many problems during the implementation of blended learning in learning activities.

All aspects of blended learning implementation in the listening and speaking courses mentioned before would not be investigated. The researcher would only investigate some of the mentioned problems; both are selecting learning activities and factors in selecting the activities for listening and speaking courses using the blended learning method. This issue needs to be investigated because it is related to the teacher's preparation and implementation during the learning activities. Furthermore, the number of researches about blended learning implementation that invited teachers as participants is less than the research that invited students as participants.

The Delimitation of the Problem

According to the problem explained before, the researcher aimed to investigate learning activities for listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods in an EFL context. Additionally, the researcher is also aimed to investigate the factors in selecting learning activities to be included by the teachers for in-class activities and out-class activities in listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods. Furthermore, four EFL teachers who

taught listening and speaking courses using blended learning method in an Islamic private university in Yogyakarta were invented in this research.

The Research Questions

1. What learning activities are selected by the EFL teachers in listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods?
2. What factors are considered by the EFL teachers to select the learning activities in listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods?

The Objectives of the Study

1. Identifying the learning activities chosen by the EFL teachers in listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods.
2. Exploring the factors considered by the EFL teachers in selecting the learning activities to be included in listening and speaking courses using blended learning method.

The Significance of the Study

This study expected to show the benefits for university, teachers, the researcher and other researchers.

For university. This study is expected to give more comprehension for the university as a policymaker about developing blended learning as a teaching method. Furthermore, it also helps to develop the learning management system (LMS) to accommodate the teacher and students' learning activities while using blended learning methods.

For teachers. This study is expected to give more comprehension, specifically for English language teachers about selecting learning activities for listening and speaking courses, which can help the students gain the learning objectives and what factors that should be considered before deciding the activities, especially for listening and speaking courses using blended learning methods.

For the researcher. As a future EFL teacher, the researcher expects to understand better how to develop language learning courses using blended learning methods, especially for listening and speaking courses. Furthermore, the researcher expects to know what kind of learning activities should be included in in-class activities and in out-class activities for listening and speaking courses in a blended learning context.

For other researchers. This study is expected to give a new finding of the implementation of blended learning in the English language, especially for listening and speaking courses. Related to the changes and development of

technology and other aspects included in the blended learning method, this research has the potential to be a reference to other researchers in the future who want to discuss or conduct the research about the implementation of blended learning in English language learning, especially for listening and speaking courses.