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CONTENTS

STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF GOOGLE CLASSROOM IN ENGLISH CLASS

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Abstract

Students have been equipped with technology at their fingertips. They can easily access information anytime and anywhere, as long as the internet connection is available. With the availability of mobile devices in their hands, students can learn better with the aid of Google Classroom. Using Google Classroom can promote their autonomy as this platform helps students to interact, negotiate, and decide the learning process. The study aims to discover students' perspective on the use of Google Classroom in English class among the students of Department of Islamic Economics, Islamic University of Indonesia. The study shows that students enjoy the learning process using this platform. Student-teacher interaction runs pretty well; additionally, feedback on assignments given can also be conducted real time. However, students see that problems, like, unstable internet connection and appropriate instructions on the material's discussed are points that have to be solved in the coming courses.

Keywords: Technology, English Classes, Google Classroom

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning in class nowadays requires technology as a so-called backbone to the process itself. In higher education setting, teachers or lecturers are getting much more aware to the needs of "staying online" among their students. On the use of electronic devices for communication, a study in 2011 among first-year university students in the U.S. indicates that there was a negative relationship between the usage of electronic devices and academic performance. McCoy (2013, in Taleb, 2017) finds that university students averagely check their phones 11 times a day while attending class. This number may increase sharply due to the current popularity of social media. Name it FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) which demands students not to miss anything in their virtual lives and may lead to misuse of mobile devices in class. Shelby Harkness in her article "Understanding FOMO, the Syndrome of the Millennials" pinpoints at social media's role in worsening FOMO, a new form of social anxiety. When a post

made in Facebook orInstagram, for instance, it triggered other users not only to instantly react (in form of *likes* or *loves*) to it but also to place their comment in it. Same thing also occurs in chatting applications, like, WhatsApp or Line. Real-time response defines a student's existence within his/her circles. Thus, McCoy's statement goes hand-in-hand with Harkness's opinion; when people get connected as easy as a click, their focus will shift within seconds.

Should this phenomenon perceive with constant negativity? In some sense, it is not necessarily so. Formal classroom learning can surely learn from this situation. A win-win solution can be offered in which teachers or lecturers can assist the learning process, and students can still use their mobile devices in class. AlsoLearning Management System (LMS) can be an option. LMS grants access which encourages students to learn in and outside the class. Higher education institution may develop their own LMS or utilize existing ones. As a sample case, Universitas Islam

Indonesia (UII) developed Moodle-based LMS named KLASIBER in its early years of e-learning implementation; however, this LMS was integrated into another system named Google Classroom to give better accessibility and more familiar system to other Google features. This study proposes to discover students' perspective on the use of Google Classroom in English Class. The users are 90 first-year students who took English classes in the Department of Islamic Economics, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Indonesia. The study summarizes students' insights after using Google Classroom for an entire semester and analyses their opinions on both positive and negative sides of implementing this free LMS in their classes. The study also tries to formulate strategies which may support the efficiency and effectiveness of Google Classroom in language classes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
a. MALL (Mobile-assisted Language Learning)

Mobile devices have long been part of language learning. In the field of MALL (Mobile-assisted Language Learning), mobile learning can be divided into the essence of learner's mobility and the use of portable devices (Burston, 2014). The first type put emphasize on learner's mobility and the ability to make use of available devices offered to him/her, such as, mobile phones, computers, and websites. The second type goes the other way around; devices define the learning. It means that learning which utilizes net book, tablet, or smart phones is considered mobile learning. Recent development indicates rapid expansion in mobile phone technology which then makes it a prime source of learning among adolescents and young adults.

In 2013, mobile phone subscription in developed countries reached over 128% of the total population; therefore, it attracted major MALL application developers. Therefore, MALL has been synonymous with mobile phone application (Burston, 2014). Applications in any mobile devices have enabled learners to access various learning materials clicks away. Byhaving applicationsstudentscan set their own goals in learning; thus, it makes learning much more engaging for them; additionally, technology has helped in solving problems of traditional classroom setting, for instance, a lack of language use chances, personalized learning, and able to learn anytime, anywhere (Shadiev R., H. W., 2017)

In language learning setting, Comas-Quinn(2009, in Oberg and Daniels (2013) assert that having students at the center of learning enables transition from linguistic inputs and mental information processing to the things that learners do and say while involved in meaningful activity. Hence, technology—in form of mobile phone applications—has created additional authentic learning environment, also fulfilled, what Oberg and Daniels (2013)highlight,as the three C's of education models, (1) Construction (building an understanding), (2) Conversation (with teachers, other learners, selves), and (3) Control (of the process, pursuing knowledge). Additionally, the growing needs of English as medium instruction, especially in Information Technology (IT), have affected the way it is taught in higher education.

The rapid development of IT has also brought new dimension to language learning, regarding option in linking language learning with current IT trends. Selwyn and Bulfin (2016, in Elaish, 2017) assert that, at present, students are accustomed with personally-owned devices with wireless connection and "always on." Therefore, in the short future, it is highly likely that mobile learning is gaining its momentum in higher education setting. Mobile learning will not only enhance learning but also support

interactions among learners. Alrasheedi and Capretz (2015, in Elaish, 2017) add that mobility is a distinctive feature in mobile learning which shapes it into a new educational platform.

b. Autonomous Learning

Autonomous learning puts learners' empowerment as its basis. Benson and Voller (1997, in Kaur, 2014) put autonomy in five ways: (a) for conditions where learner fully learning by himself/herself, (b) for a set of skills which is mastered by self-directed learning, (c) for natural capacity which is shaped by institutional education, (d) for learner's practice of responsibility in his/her own learning, and (e) for the right of learner to direct his/her own learning. Autonomous learners can also be characterized by high awareness on their learning duties, as well as the competence to monitor their progress. They are also inquisitive, treasure challenges in new things, and tend to be persistent, independent, and discipline. Thus, (Nordlund, 1997) labels autonomous learners as learners' capacity in directing their learning, shared-responsibility in handling evaluation, and fairly aware with their learning duties.

In classroom setting, mobile devices, like, tablets and smart phones, come similarly as two sides of a knife. In one hand, it helps learners to amplify their learning (with the presence of sufficient internet connection) by browsing required learning sources. On the other, it tends to distract them with off-task activities, for example, accessing social media or surfing for unrelated subjects. Therefore, Lyddon (2016) proposes five characteristics that autonomous learners should master about technology used in classroom setting. The characteristics come into order as compliance, competence, cognizance, introspection, and diplomacy. Lyddon describes compliance as those who are physically attending the class but fail to comprehend a given task. Competence covers compliant ones with an addition of

knowing the flow of the class; however, they sometimes try to 'violate' the intended task. Cognizance characterizes learners who understand the essence of the task. Learners who are introspective can relate to the given task. Finally, they can accomplish the task as expected. Lyddon believes that involving learners in a continuous self-reflection can help them in finding their learning characteristics. Thus, the learners can recognize the use of technology that will help them to achieve their goals.

c. Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a part of Google Suite for Education and officially launched in 2014. As described in www.support.google.com, Google Classroom aims for more productive and meaningful teaching by efficiently managing assignments, increasing collaboration, and improving communication. It is also equipped with various features that enable teacher to manage class more effectively through Google Mails, Google Docs, Google Drive, Google Slides, and recently, Google Calendar. Nagele (2017, in Muslimah, 2018) asserts that teacher can use Google Classroom to propose an active lesson which is more student-centered, collaborative, and meaningful learning. He also points out that Google Classroom facilitates accessibility of learning materials (with the availability of internet connection), teacher-learner communication, real-time feedback, and tailored learning. Therefore, Google Classroom can effectively help teacher in handling students' work and aid learner with user friendly operating application.

Initially, Universitas Islam Indonesia has an e-learning system namely KLASIBER designed to help lecturers in managing their online classes. KLASIBER is a Moodle-based learning management system and covers all courses offered in the university. Lecturers need to login with their UNISYS account which integrates all access to Google's features; classes

assigned to them will be shown along with the names of the students. Due to continuous technical problems, the system was replaced with Google Classroom in 2015. The new learning management system is an integrated educational tool dedicated to both online and offline learning in this university. There are points to be considered on the use of Google Classroom in higher education institutions. Shaharanee and Espinosa do highlight the benefits of using Google Classroom, especially on performance improvement in communication, interaction, functionality, accessibility, and user satisfaction, as well as lower cost management and improvement in collaborative activities by using Google Classroom (Azhar and Iqbal, 2018). Nonetheless, Iftakhar (2016, in Ballew, 2017) reminds the platform users to constantly keep optimistic standpoint of technology's integration into classroom instruction.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive-qualitative method to understand students' perspective on the use of Google Classroom in the English class. The researchers used students' reflections as the source of the data in this study. Creswell (2014) states that a qualitative study can use documents, like, public documents (e.g., meetings' minutes, official reports, newspaper articles) and private documents (e.g., personal journals and diaries, letters, emails). Creswell also affirms that documents are unobtrusive sources of information and help researcher to have written manuscripts which are available to be interpreted at researcher's convenient time. A total of 90 students of Class 2016, Department of Islamic Economics, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Indonesia participated in this study. There were two English classes in this batch and the materials covered were on General English, as assigned by the department. All students were given consent form and reflection sheet by the

end of final meeting (Meeting 14) in Even Semester 2016/2017. This sheet also meant to be a form of evaluation to the learning process that had been conducted along the term.

By the beginning of the term, the students needed to approve teacher's invitation to join the English class' Google Classroom account. They were also expected to participate in every activity given through the platform actively.By the end of the term; they were required to share their learning experience. As mentioned in the consent form, students had to answer all the questions in the reflection sheet frankly. Also, experience shared in the reflection sheet was intentionally written down anonymously, so that students did not have any burden in answering the questions. Data from the reflection sheet were then classified and interpreted. The result of data interpretation is presented in the following section.

4. DISCUSSION

The use of Google Classroom in the English class of Islamic Economics generated various perspectives. As a digital learning platform, the implementation of Google Classroom in English classes is transformed into an essence that is not only focused on teaching and learning pedagogy, but also on considering appropriate ways encountering unpredictable situations in the learning process. In this case, noticing on how the way Google Classroom is applied, students' characteristics become essential factors that influence students' perspectives upon the use of Google Classroom in the English classes. Accordingly, learning process working through in the classes is inherently involving students as the observers. Thus, open evaluations given by the students are also one considerable aspect to improve this teaching strategy in the future.

Based on students' reflections, the researchers have found several benefits

which promote learning operations in this course. For generation that grows up with advanced technology, Google Classroom is reckoned as a media which facilitates flexible usage, meaning that students can learn and operate it either in or outside the classroom. One reason students consider utilizing this platform as it provides an opportunity to get access to learning environment much easier and faster at any time they want. Besides, this platform also supports students to be more practical and transparent toward the process of acquiring materials. Google Classroom can be used either by Smartphone or computer. However, students prefer to use Google Classroom application through Smartphone rather than computer. Learning process conducted in class is facilitated by students' evaluation given through Google Classroom. More importantly, Google Classroom is appraised as a better-template platform for studying than KLASIBER. Features provided in Google Classroom have appropriate functions that are needed to get easy use. Comparing to KLASIBER, which is a Moodle-based platform made by the university which has similar function, Google Classroom is friendly to use and seldom occur any technical problem. This result goes correspondingly with Crane's (2016, in Heggart, 2018) research result which mentions that GAfE (Google Apps for Education, including Google Classroom) provides ease of access, simple assignment management, and improvement in communication. He also adds that GAfE products improve teacher's and student's competency in using 21st century technology.

Thus, by considering these benefits, students are assisted to follow learning development. Otherwise, there are some aspects seen by the students as obstacles within adhering the transfer of knowledge in this subject. Researchers divided the problems into two categories; technical and instructional problem. In discussing technical problem, this category is pointing out the access of using Google Classroom from the start until the end of the course. Firstly, in using Google Classroom, students need to make sure that they have sufficient internet access to their electronic devices. At a time when the lights out, for instance, those who use Wi-Fi connection couldn't access the internet. Sequentially, they should use internet data via Smartphone which requires more bandwidththan the one used computer. Besides, some students who use Smartphone are struggling to get access to Google Classroom because some different features and templates are set for computer users.

Next, the format of announcement should be shared by adding topics. There was no appearing notification when the lecturer posted a material in the homepage. This caused invisible reminders of the assignment because visible deadlines only appeared from created topics. Another thing is the assignments submission to the post appeared in the homepage are risky to be copied by other students. It happened because one student could see the other students' works in the homepage post unless it was created in topics. Importantly, this problem also inherently becomes lecturer's input for the upcoming course. All of technical problems refer to the Google Classroom's application system means it should be recognized for all members of teaching and learning practice before the course begins. Hence, researchers deemed there is a need for a particular introduction of using Google Classroom in the beginning of the course.

In deliberating another category of problem, instructional problem is explaining on how the procedures of delivering materials in the classroom are. The students argued that the displays of Google Classroom could be variedto encourage the students not to be bored. Knowing that Google Classroom facilitates the displays; however, the lecturer reflects to initiate creating various content knowledge by giving additional

videos and supporting references in the next year course. Moreover, uploading materials employing sharing posts is not guaranteeing that the students understand toward the instructions even though the lecturer has explained them in the class. Consequently, the lecturer reminded and re-announced the instructions in the classroom to facilitate students who do not get the instructions. Some students asserted that uploading materials can be separated by delivering section to section. Nevertheless, it returns to the students' characteristics.

Additionally, confronting the task submission, the students suggested that it could be both online and offline submission. On the contrary, for the evidence of the assignment, the faculty still requires hard file submission which means the task that can be soft file or paperless. However, it is still supposed to be real paper. Instructional problems should be dealt together by the lecturer and students without breaking the rules of the department/faculty. Here, the researchers identify a gap in the way online learning perceived by students and department/faculty staffs. Google Classroom provides a stream line of communication and workflow for students. Being free of paper is a crucial factor in developing learning strategies. Thus, students can keep their files more organized and need less stored paperless in a single program (Latif, 2016, in Al-Maroof, 2018). Nevertheless, department/faculty staffs need real prove to students' involvement in the learning process, in regards to reporting process to parents. Therefore, this type of problem should be intensively communicated and aligned, not only from lecturer as the instructor but also all parties related.

Recognizing the essence of the course evaluation, researchers concluded that there are four circumstances should be doing in the next year course. In the beginning of the course, lecturer should invite the students into Google Classroom group. It is necessary to do because in this course, Google Classroom was created first and the lecturer gives the students the code number. This system was not involving all students because there were few students not joining the group until the end of the course. The second point is that a short training in using Google Classroom needs to be conducted in the first meeting. It aims to give illustration and understanding on how to use Google Classroom effectively and efficiently. The next point is that simulation of the assignments' procedures should be shown to encounter students with understandable explanation and practices. It can also include videos and pictures to support real implementation in the next meeting. Finally, Google Form Evaluation Survey needs to be shared to the students before mid-term and final examination because it will help the lecturer to supply learning improvements and to escalate students' performance before the course ends. It is expected that significant improvement canbe made in the upcoming course.

5. CONCLUSION

The use of Google Classroom in the English class is perceived in many ways by the students of Department of Islamic Economics, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Islam Indonesia. The results show that the noticeable problem in implementing this platform is not only on pedagogical matters but also the ways to tackle unpredictable situations during the learning process. The researchers also notice learners' characteristic as a key factor which contributes to the way the learners perceive the use of Google Classroom. Google Classroom has beneficial potential to promote better learning and teaching in the real classroom. Essentially, the use of Google Classroom should be taught and implemented overall of the students for learning activities to be getting improved. Considering that the university has worked on socializing and intensifying the use of

Google Classroom, course evaluation has to be done for the next opportunities. Further studies with more extensive respondents are highly recommended to draw broader outcomes in a greater scale.

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