



## Students' Perceptions toward Synchronous Online Learning at the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang

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### Abstract

*This research analyzed students' perception of synchronous learning through three aspects. The design of the research was descriptive research. To gather the data, semi-structured interview guidelines were used as the instrument. The subject or the key informants of this research consisted of 25 students of the K3 year 2020 English Education at Universitas Negeri Padang. The researcher used random cluster sampling to pick out the sample. Data analysis showed that students had positive perceptions in terms of the teaching material and the student interaction aspect. Yet, they had negative perceptions about the aspect of the learning environment. The students claimed, in terms of learning environment, synchronous learning created a monotonous learning atmosphere they felt bored, unfocused and easily distracted. Therefore, it could be concluded that, if among the synchronous learning aspects, one aspect was perceived negatively, there was a possibility that the learning process was not yet optimal. Thus, it was suggested that the learning environment aspect should be given more attention to due to its impact on students' learning process.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus has an impact on all aspects of life, including education. At the beginning of 2020, the school policy changed from face-to-face learning to online classes. Schools and universities usually face to face learning become virtual. Jena (2020) states that online learning is defined as a learning system that uses the internet network. For instance, schools and universities usually use Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Video Conferencing to teach students.

Online learning has become the learning alternative because students are not able to come to regular classes. It is because coronavirus is still spreading in many regions, such as Padang city. Moreover, starting On March 17, 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has decided that schools must conduct online learning for areas affected by COVID (Kemdikbud RI, 2020). These roles lead students and teachers to learn and also work from home. It fully replaces face-to-face learning in the classroom by using synchronous online learning.

Online learning is divided into two types such as synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. Salmon (2013) states that an asynchronous environment is usually not limited by time, and students can work on e-learning activities from home. On the other, Hughes A (2014), teachers and students can meet directly during the learning process using the electronic system. In synchronous learning, there are several examples, like chat rooms, that provide an opportunity for teachers and students to interact with each other. Chat rooms and video conferencing are also used to facilitate face-to-face communication. Interaction that occurs directly between teachers and students in real-time looks similar to classroom interactions, but distance is no longer an obstacle. So, the differences between asynchronous and synchronous are based on the implementation.

Synchronous learning is almost the same as the communicative way of learning by the whiteboard. Video and chat provide feedback as quickly as possible to encourage students to improve their language and ability. Furthermore, this learning is a part that can replace face-to-face classes but in real-time (Keegan et al. 2005).

Perception is a process in which a person gets some information from the environment. One's perception also affects the learning process and motivates students to learn, so perception is a view to success. (Pangaribuan, 2015). Furthermore, it is crucial to know students' perceptions of synchronous learning. The crucial of students' perception is for lecturers to evaluate the learning process. Perception is important because by knowing perception, we can find out what forms of phenomena exist in our environment.

There have been many studies discussing synchronous learning. First, from his research, Dada et al. (2019) analyzed how synchronous and asynchronous can affect Nigerian students' academics. Based on this research result, synchronous and asynchronous affected the academic student's performance quite effectively. Second, Malik et al. (2017) investigated the students' preferences for using asynchronous and synchronous e-learning. Students are known to have a greater interest in synchronous learning activities. Hagi (2021) analyzed the synchronous learning process through students' perception using Zoom in English education. Fifth, Al Ikhlas (2021) did research by using Zoom, WhatsApp, and Telegram. From their research, students assumed positive toward synchronous learning.

The studies above have similarities in discussing the perception of synchronous and asynchronous learning. The studies above have similarities in discussing synchronous and asynchronous learning, but the aspects discussed in this research are aspects of nature, areas, and structure in the first study. Then, there is the aspect of the placement and the use of e-learning resources. Furthermore, there are aspects of the learning experience, lecturers' abilities, facilities, and infrastructure, even from the aspect of teacher and environment.

Meanwhile, this research will focus on discussing aspects of teaching materials, student interaction, and the learning environment. These three aspects need to be discussed because they affect the success or implementation of a learning process. Therefore this research needs to be carried out.

This study only focused on students' perception of synchronous learning through aspects; Teaching material, student interaction, and learning environment because there were still a few researchers who analyzed it.

In accordance with the explanation above, the writer assumed that analyzing English students' perceptions of synchronous online learning is urgent. Furthermore, in this study, the researcher did research on students' perceptions toward synchronous online learning at Universitas Negeri Padang.

## **METHOD**

In this study, the researcher used descriptive research to investigate the data by explaining the data obtained entirely. The population of this research was students of English Education in the English Department year 2020 at Universitas Negeri Padang. The researcher selected the year 020. The researcher used random cluster sampling to pick out the sample. The sample of this research was 25 students of K3'2020. The instrument in this study used semi-structured interviews. As Creswell J, (2014) stated interview was two people exchanging opinions, beliefs, and feelings about something in their own words. Online interviews can be used to collect data through the Internet for the purpose of investigating it to provide evidence related to the research question. Online interviews can be used synchronously (in real-time), which involves the exchange of audio, text, and video. The online interview gives participants flexibility because they can be involved in this research even at their respective locations (Chapman et al, 2013).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Students' Perception of the Teaching Material Aspect**

The data analysis found that 25 students from the K3 class were interviewed about the teaching material. Then, all of them had positive perceptions about aspects of teaching material in synchronous online learning. It is seen from the answers given during the interview.

First, the students were asked whether synchronous learning was delivered. Most of them had similar answers, 4 of 25 students mentioned that learning has very good, easy to understand, and well conveyed. 12 of the students' answer has good and clearly explained, and 8 of the students had quite good. Then, it was possible to say that in terms of presentation, the students positively perceived the delivery of material through synchronous online learning. It was positive because the material presented and explained by the lecturer was conveyed very well so that students could understand the material.

Second, the students were asked their perception of the media used, and most of them had similar answers, 21 of 25 students mentioned that the media used were power point and Video. 3 of the students answered only PowerPoint was used in delivering the material. There were two media used in the learning, it was said that in terms of media used, they had positive perception because there were several media used to convey the material to students.

Third, the students were asked about their perceptions of the ease of understanding the material through the media used. Most of them had similar answers, 21 of 25 students mentioned the media impacted the ease of understanding. Additionally, 5 of 21 students that stated before they agreed the media that the Video was better than PowerPoint due to the attractive Video. Then, 2 other students that stated before agreed the media PowerPoint was better than Video because the

material was explained in detail. 4 of the students agreed that understanding the material was relatively easy because of the media. Furthermore, it could be said in terms of the use of media. Students had positive perception because the media used in delivering the material is created more interesting by the lecturer, so it gives an effect that makes it easier for students to understand the material.

Fourth, the students were asked about their perception of the learning process in accordance with the syllabus. All of 25 students agreed that the material presented was per the syllabus. Thus, it could be interpreted that the learning process following the syllabus had positive perception.

Fifth, the students were asked about their perception of the effectiveness of the material provided. 10 of 25 students mentioned the material provided was effective. One of the students stated before argued that the material provided was effective except when network problems occurred. 15 of the students answers to the material provided were quite effective. On the whole, it was said in terms of the effectiveness of the material provided, students had positive perception because the material given was explained in more detail and understandable.

Referring to the data, the five questions were responded positively. It could be stated that the students' perception of aspects of teaching material in synchronous online learning was positive.

## **2. Students' Perception of the Student's Interaction Aspect**

The data analysis also found that 25 students from K3 class were interviewed about the students interaction. Then, all of them had positive perceptions about aspects of students interaction in synchronous online learning. It is seen from the answers given during the interview.

First, the students were asked their perception question and answer section in the learning process. All of 25 students agreed that there was question and answer activity in the learning process. Therefore, it could be said in terms of question and answer activity, students had positive perception in answer and question activity because the lecturer, in synchronous learning process carries out the activity.

Second, the students were asked about their perception of questioning and answering toward speaking skills. All of 25 students agreed that there were speaking skills improved through question and answer activities. In addition, 4 of them stated that before they agreed, there was a little bit of improvement in their speaking skills through this section. Thus, it could be interpreted that question and answer toward speaking skills, they had positive perception about this one because speaking skills were improved through the activity such as pronunciation and grammar. In addition, students also became brave and confident.

Third, the students were asked about their perception of the example of material. 17 of 25 students mentioned they agreed that the material example given were pictures and video. 4 of 25 students answered agree that video media was given to the students. 4 of the students answered agree that picture was also given before learning started. The material example was given in some courses. Then, it was classified in terms of the material example, the students had positive perception. It was positive because the lecturer gave the material example to be introductory to the material that would be conveyed Fourth, the students were asked about their

perception toward a willingness to ask the question. 19 of 25 students mentioned, they agreed the question usually asked. 4 of 25 students answered sometimes asked questions. 1 of the students answered that it was rarely asked in the learning process. Furthermore, it was possible to say in term of willingness had positive perception because most of them agreed about their willingness to ask questions in order to understand the material better.

Fourth, the students were asked their perception toward willingness to ask question. 19 of 25 students mentioned, they agreed the question usually asked. 4 of 25 students answer sometimes asked questions. 1 of students answer rarely asked in learning process. Furthermore, it was possible to say in term of willingness had positive perception because most of them agree about their willingness to ask questions in order to understand the material better.

Fifth, the students were asked about their perception of motivation in learning process. All of 25 students agreed that the motivation was given in the learning process. Furthermore, it could said in term of motivation, they had positive perception of this part because almost all of the motivation given to students was in the form of encouragement to read lots and review the material.

Based on the data above, the 5 questions were replied positively. It could be uttered that students' perception on students interactions was very positive. in the learning.

### **3. Students' Perception of Learning Environment Aspect**

The data analysis also found that students from the K3 class were interviewed about the students interaction. Then, all of them had perceptions about aspects of learning environment in synchronous online learning. It could be seen from the answers given during the interview.

First, the students were asked about their perception toward the atmosphere of synchronous learning. 15 of 25 students mentioned, the atmosphere was boring, interaction limitations, staring at a laptop screen for a long time, monotonous way, and less variety in media. 10 of 25 students answered the atmosphere was not boring and could be followed from home, creative way. Then, it was possible to say in terms of atmosphere learning, the students had negative perceptions because dominant students agreed that this learning was boring. After all, some negative views caused it.

Second, the students were asked about their perception concerning motivation and enthusiasiasm in learning process. 15 of 25 students mentioned, they were motivated and excited during the learning process . 10 of 25 students answered that they were unmotivated and not enthusiastic. Then, it could be said in term of motivation and enthusiasiasm in the learning process, they had positive perceptions because most of the students have a positive perception because of the desire to get good grades, and knowledge must be obtained through this learning.

Third, the students were asked about their perception of synchronous learning through zoom. All of 25 students mentioned, zoom media wanted to learn. Thus, it could be interpreted that they had very positive perceptions. It was positive because zoom media gave many advantages to students in learning.

Fourth, the students were asked about their perception of time management through synchronous learning. 11 of 25 students mentioned that synchronous learning could train in managing time. 14 of 25 students answered that synchronous learning could not be trained in managing time. Therefore, it was said in terms of management time, they had negative perception. It was negative due to this learning provided an opportunity to be undisciplined and the time ignorance.

Fifth, the students were asked about their perception of discipline in doing an assignment. 12 of 25 students agreed that synchronous learning taught honesty in doing the task. Although, 13 of 25 students answered disagree about that because this learning gave an opportunity for students to cheat with others or internet. Certainly, it was possible to say in terms of discipline through synchronous learning, the students have negative perceptions because they are not supervised directly, and there is a big opportunity to cheat in doing assignments.

Indicated from the data, 5 questions were responded to negatively. It was negative because 3 of 5 questions had negative perception, 2 of 5 questions had positive perception. So, it was concluded that the aspect of learning material had negative perception.

### ***Discussion***

Based on the research question findings, it was founded that students have positive perception of the two aspects, such as aspects of teaching material and students interaction. However, one negative perception was the learning environment. Therefore, there are 3 reasons points that would be discussed further.

Firstly, the finding shows that students positively agreed that the teaching material was good and understandable. However, there is a problem in the teaching and learning process because of a network problem. Apuke and Iyendo (2018) stated that dominant of all students feel limited in understanding and accessing material due to insufficient and inefficient internet facilities. This problem limits students from being able to understand the material and access learning.

The result of this research is relevant to the previous research. Vinsensius (2021) He found that network problems became the biggest problem in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, Faruq et al (2022) found that students' perception toward synchronous learning using online media had positively perceptions, but some problems occurred during this learning process. Technical problem becomes one of the problems faced in the teaching and learning process synchronous. Hagi (2021), he figured out network problems are unavoidable as long as this synchronous learning is done because synchronous learning relies on internet network. In conclusion, the internet network is a very big issue in synchronous learning, so this is a major consideration if this synchronous learning is carried out.

Secondly, the findings from the aspects of students interactions show that students' perception toward students interaction aspects was positive. It means that students agreed that through the interaction activities that occur, it could improve students' speaking skills in which pronunciation and grammar become better. Students' courage and self-confidence also improve due to interaction and discussion activities carried out during the learning process. Howe (2007) stated that interaction

is an activity where good interactions take turns which is good interactions have to include targets, topics or information, and reply.

The result of this research is relevant to the previous research. Natsir (2016) He found that speaking skill has improved, which is student has become more confident in speaking in online class. Moreover, Kusuma et al (2022) found that students have positive perception of student interaction in synchronous learning. It is positive because the interaction that occur during the learning process can advance students' confidence to present their dialogue virtually. Speaking online makes students more confident because their friends do not see them in person. The results of the research above also showed that online interaction could reduce student anxiety. In conclusion, students agree that interaction activities that do not occur face-to-face during the learning process can provide an improvement in students' speaking skills because students become more confident and dare to speak up.

Lastly, the findings from aspects of learning environment show that student had negative perception of this aspect. It means that students' perception of synchronous learning seen from the aspect of the learning environment is boring, which uses a monotonous way. In fact, digital learning in the teaching and learning process can increase their desire to learn the material. The existence of digital learning, which is learning activities carried out in different ways so it can help to vary the differences in learning styles (Atmojo & Priyo, 2020). Students are also helped to understand the material provided in fun and not monotonous way through this learning. In addition, student engagement in learning process activities can make students feel not bored and interested in participating in learning. Student engagement in the learning process plays a play a role in their learning achievement (Bundick et al 2014). Thus, there is progress in involving students in several activities that can make students interested and focused in the learning process, so it provides good achievement in learning. In conclusion, learning that is carried out in synchronous (online learning) requires using different reference methods as a medium for self-evaluation for English teachers and a reference tool for assessing their abilities to develop and become English teachers who keep up with the times.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings, it was found that the three questions had negative perceptions and two of them had positive. The five aspects play an important role in the learning process. So, the synchronous implementation targets must have all positive results. It can be concluded, the existence of negative aspects of perceptions conveyed by students will affect learning. If the learning atmosphere is not supportive such as boring, students become unfocused and easily distracted by other things. Students become unfocused and easily distracted by other things. The learning environment should be the center of attention as an important thing that must be considered because this will affect student achievement in learning.

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