Students' Perception of Online Learning Toward Speaking Ability at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstract

This research examined students' perception of online learning through five aspects of speaking ability. The design of the research was descriptive research. To collect data, the researcher employed a questionnaire. The questionnaire is made up of 25 close-ended questions related to online learning toward speaking ability. The researcher used stratified random sampling to select the sample. The sample was 30 students from five classes of 2019 English Language Education at Universitas Negeri Padang. The result of this study revealed that 63.5% of students had positive perceptions of online learning in terms of speaking ability. The students claimed their perceptions that taking part in the process of learning speaking online improved their grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension skills of speaking. Meanwhile, 36.5% of students had negative perceptions of online learning and they disagreed with online learning as a method of learning speaking. The students felt that online learning had several difficulties on the fluency and pronunciation aspects of speaking ability. These difficulties arise from issues such as unclear audio, network problems, and the need to find an area that is free from noise. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that online learning requires greater focus, particularly in terms of speaking skills.

INTRODUCTION

Online learning was the only alternative way to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, some teachers and lecturers still use online learning to teach under certain conditions. Molinda (2005: 182) defines online learning as a way of connecting students with teachers and the learning material who cannot meet directly but still communicate, interact, or collaborate. Meanwhile, Mufanti (2016) states that online learning is popular nowadays. People even consider it the main communication medium to share and retrieve information from different regions of the world. Likewise in the educational aspect, teachers can use online media to

facilitate students in learning English. Based on the definition, online learning is a way to study with the internet and digital media to deliver a lesson.

Online learning has several advantages and disadvantages for students. Yuhanna (2020) stated online learning is very advantageous because education is always updated when students are in different places. Online learning also gives flexibility to students so they can study anytime and anywhere. This statement is supported by Benito (2022) mentions that students feel comfortable, flexible, feeling at home, efficient, and self-disciplined with online classes. However, Dung (2020) states that students get tired, bored, and lose concentration on studying because of long hours of online learning. Online learning also makes it difficult for students because Wi-Fi and internet connections don't always work well. Furthermore, Benito (2022) in his research found that students feel alone, stressed, and have difficulty focusing on learning. They are also less enthusiastic and delay the execution of tasks. Based on the explanation, online learning has both positive and negative impacts on students. That's why students may have positive or negative perceptions of online learning.

According to Gibson (2012), perception is a person's process of managing and understanding stimuli into psychological experiences and assigning value to their environment. Zacks (2020) defines perception as the division of ongoing experience into significant events. Moreover, Fikri (2019) states the ability to recognize and evaluate sensory data is known as perception. Perception also means how someone feels something affects them in processing information. Besides that, perception is also a process of taking sensory data from the environment and then using it to interact to produce something useful. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that everyone has a perception of something whether it's positive or negative. Likewise, students also have perceptions of the lesson, both learning methods and learning abilities.

Speaking is one of the most important skills to develop and improve if someone wants to communicate well. Speaking abilities is one of the aspects of learning a language that presents one of the greatest challenges. Speaking in a language that is mostly spoken is challenging for many language students (Leong, 2017). According to Itkonen (2010), Speaking is a physical process that uses the articulatory mechanism to make sounds that make up speech or spoken words. Similarly, Fulcher (2003:23) also defines speaking as using words to talk to other people. Furthermore, Bueno, Madrid, & Mclaren (2006) state that speaking is one of the abilities that language learners find to be one of the most difficult to master. It's generally agreed that out of the four language skills, speaking is the most important one to have. Even though many students have spent years learning the English language, many claim that they are unable to speak the language in a way that is clear and understandable. Due to this issue, students have to learn speaking seriously to improve their speaking ability.

Overall, it may be said that students who are learning speaking have perceptions of the lesson, especially in online learning. If the lecturers use online learning in the class, the students may have different perceptions of the class. The students' perception is a crucial thing in learning activities. This statement is supported by Cole (1994) stating that it's critical to comprehend how students feel

about how teachers ask and respond to questions in the class. These impressions affect students' question-and-answer participation. Therefore, this study investigated the students' perception of online learning toward speaking ability.

A previous study explored by Nehe (2021) examined students' perception of Google Meet in the speaking lesson. Based on the result, students' reactions to Google Meet's use in a speech class demonstrated a generally positive impression of the operations, with many more citing its positive aspects than the negative aspects. Also, Putri and Suryaman (2022) analyzed students' perception of teaching speaking skills using Zoom Meeting. The study revealed that using Zoom Meeting for online English-speaking lessons offers both positive and negative aspects. Zoom Meeting helps students understand some speaking class lessons. On the other hand, most students were frustrated with studying online and lost motivation to learn. A similar aim to the study examined by Baron (2020) examined students' perceptions of online speaking skill applications. This study found that students find it simple to use Internet applications for learning English speaking. In other studies, Fauzi et al (2022) examined students' perception of online speaking activities. This study shows that while the majority of students have a good perception of online learning environments for English-speaking tasks, a tiny proportion of them still favor traditional classroom instruction.

Meanwhile, the results of this study are expected to be a reflection for lecturers to choose learning methods that are suitable for students. This research was focused on examining students' perception of online learning toward speaking ability whereas some previous studies only focused on students' perceptions of applications used in online classes. Moreover, the results may differ because the previous study was conducted in a distant area with a different population from the location that the researcher investigated which is the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang.

METHOD

In this research, the researcher employed descriptive research. According to Sugiyono (2013), descriptive research is a systematic and accurate method for gathering information about the characteristics of specific populations or regions to provide symptoms, facts, or events. Descriptive research typically does not require the identification or explanations of relationships, nor the testing of hypotheses.

This research aims to determine students' perceptions of speaking in online learning. Thus, a closed-ended questionnaire was employed to gather data. The researcher used a questionnaire to provide descriptive answers to the research questions. The questionnaire consists of 25 close-ended questions that have to be answered by respondents. The questionnaire is written in both Indonesian and English so it is easier for respondents to understand. The researcher distributed the questionnaire by using Google Forms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was about students' perception of online learning toward speaking ability. The responses to the twenty-five statements are displayed in the tables provided below.

Table 1. Score of The Data

No	Questions	N%				Mean	Category
		SA	A	D	SD		
1.	I could speak English well and correctly in online learning.	2 6,7%	16 53,3%	12 40%	0 0%	2.66	Positive
2.	I found it easy to speak English welland correctly in online learning.	1 3,3%	14 46,7%	14 46,7%	1 3,3%	2.50	Negative
3.	I felt confident about the grammar I use when I spoke English in online learning.	1 3,3%	10 33,3%	18 60%	1 3,3%	2.36	Negative
4	I was able to practice speakingEnglish well in online learning.	1 3,3%	17 56,7%	10 33,3%	2 6,7%	2.56	Positive
5.	I could improve my English grammar through online learning.	2 6,7%	20 66,7%	6 20%	2 6,7%	2.73	Positive
6.	I felt confident in the words I said when speaking English in online learning.	10 10%	15 50%	12 40%	0 0%	2.66	Positive
7.	I found it easy remember the words would speak in online learning.	2 6,7%	16 53,3%	11 36,7%	1 3,3%	2.60	Positive
8.	I was able to communicate well with my lecturers and friends in online learning because I could choose the appropriate vocabulary when speaking English.	4 13,3%	16 53,3%	7 23,3%	3 10%	2.73	Positive
9.	I could improve my ability to memorize English vocabulary by speaking in online learning.	1 3,3%	17 56,7%	12 40%	0 0%	2.66	Positive
10.	I was motivated to add and learn new vocabulary by learning speaking online.	3 10%	16 53,3%	10 33,3%	1 3,3%	2.73	Positive
11.	I could understand speaking material clearly and accurately through online learning.	0 0%	18 60%	8 26,7%	4 13,3%	2.46	Negative
12.	I was able to understand and re- explain the speaking material clearly and accurately through online learning.	1 3,3%	12 40%	14 46,7%	3 10%	2.36	Negative
13.	I was able to respond to	1	22	4	3	2.70	Positive

	something my lecturer and friends said through online learning.	3,3%	73,3%	13,3%	10%		
14.	I thought online learning improved my comprehension in speaking English.	1 3,3%	19 63,3%	7 23,3%	3 10%	2.60	Positive
15.	I liked online learning because it was easier for me to understand speaking material.	3 10%	15 50%	7 23,3%	5 16,7%	2.53	Positive
16.	I could speak English easily and precisely in online learning.	2 6,7%	15 50%	11 36,7%	2 6,7%	2.46	Negative
17.	I could speak English fluently in online learning.	1 3,3%	10 33,3%	16 53,3%	3 10%	2.30	Negative
18.	I felt confident when I spoke English in online learning.	1 3,3%	10 33,3%	15 50%	4 13,3%	2.23	Negative
19.	I was free to express my ideas and opinions in online learning.	1 3,3%	18 60%	10 33,3%	1 3,3%	2.70	Positive
20.	I was getting fluent in speaking English through online learning.	1 3,3%	17 56,7%	6 20%	6 20%	2.53	Positive
21.	I could pronounce the words correctly in online learning.	1 3,3%	17 56,7%	8 26,7%	4 13,3%	2.50	Negative
22.	I found it easy to learn English pronunciation through online learning.	1 3,3%	15 50%	9 30%	5 16,7%	2.40	Negative
23.	I thought online learning improved my pronunciation in speaking English.	1 3,3%	17 56,7%	9 30%	3 10%	2.53	Positive
24.	In my opinion, online learning wasan interesting learning method toimprove my English pronunciation.	3 10%	15 50%	8 26,7	4 13,3%	2.56	Positive
25.	From my perception, online learning was the best learningmethod to improve my English pronunciation.	2 6,7%	14 46,7%	8 26,7%	8 20%	2.43	Negative
Total Mean						2.54	Positive

Table 2. Summary Score of The Data

Aspect of Speaking	Statement	Mean	Category
Grammar	1-5	2.56	Positive
Vocabulary	6-10	2.68	Positive
Comprehension	11-15	2.53	Positive
Fluency	16-20	2.44	Negative
Pronunciation	21-25	2.48	Negative
All Questionnaire Statements	25	2.54	Positive

Based on the results, it was determined that the majority of students had a positive perception of online learning in terms of speaking ability, and these results were based on the data gathered from a questionnaire that was filled out by 30 students. It has been observed that a large number of students have expressed their perceptions that taking part in the process of learning speaking online improves their grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The result of this study is supported by Azizah (2022) stated that there is a perceived effectiveness of online learning in developing speaking skills among students.

However, there were a few students who struggled with the challenge of getting fluency and perfect pronunciation in their speaking ability. It is assumed that students have difficulty with their speaking fluency and pronunciation because their voices are unclear due to audio and network issues. Furthermore, it is difficult for students to locate a quiet place away from noise. This statement is supported by Melani (2022) discovered that students dislike the idea of speaking practice for lots of reasons, including connection concerns, decreased motivation to study, and difficulty locating the best technique and place to study speaking.

CONCLUSION

Following the collection and examination of the data, the researcher concluded that many students had favorable perceptions of online learning about their speaking ability. It was also discovered that students have the potential to improve their speaking ability through online learning. Meanwhile, there are a few students who disagree that online learning improves their speaking ability. Finally, it can be concluded that online learning needs more attention, especially in speaking ability.

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