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Students' Perceptions of Synchronous Online Learning using Google Meet in a Reading Class

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the students' perceptions of synchronous online learning using Google Meet. Synchronous online learning is applied to facilitate the students to acquire knowledge during this pandemic. However, the students' perception of the synchronous online using Google Meet in a specific skill in ELT is still understudied. A qualitative case study was used to investigate this phenomenon. The participants of this study were 18 students in the first semester who were Electrical Engineering major. The participants were chosen purposively due to class participation and willingness. The data was gathered from the questionnaire and interviews. It was analyzed using the Interactive Model of Data Analysis. This study exposed that the students positively perceived implementing synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading class. They pointed out that it could help the students read more and feel motivated to be active. It also aided to increase their reading by online discussion. However, they found some challenges which they perceived during synchronous online learning. The challenges came from environmental, technical, and personal problems. The implication of this study relates to continuing the teaching-learning process of synchronous online learning using Google Meet. It provides some benefits that support the teaching learning process. Then, the institution and the government should support and promote the effectiveness of synchronous online learning by improving their learning and providing the necessary learning infrastructure for all students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of the Coronavirus has directed to thoughtful changes in all sectors of life worldwide (Cavallo & Forman, 2020; Haleem et al., 2020), especially education ultimately (Murphy, 2020; Rundle et al., 2020). All routines appear to be interrupted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This condition makes the government announce schools and colleges are closing to reduce the spread of the virus (Abuhammad, 2020; Huber & Helm, 2020; Muthuprasad et al., 2021; Sparrow et al., 2020). However, to keep everything going on, it agreed to arrange for a "new normal" system to promote online education when the schools and the colleges are closed (Xie et al., 2020).

The students needed to continue studying from home using online learning during this situation. According to the Minister of Education and Culture, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Home Affairs of Indonesia through circular number 4/KB/2020, number 737 in 2020, number HK.01.08/Menkes/7093/2020, and number 420-3987 in 2020 appealed to all university leaders, head of High School and head of Higher Education Service Institute appealed to implement hybrid learning. However, at that time of the research, the researcher found that university still implemented online learning due to reduce the spread of virus and pay attention to the students' health. According to Anderson (2008) and Jena (2020), online learning uses the Internet to access the materials, interacts with the teacher and other students to acquire knowledge. In addition, Khan (2005) notes that online learning is a creative method to provide everyone, anywhere, with a well-designed, learner-centred, engaging, and supporting learning experience using different digital technologies and other types of suitable learning materials for a free and accessible learning environment.

Previously mentioned, some expert describes online learning. There are also many experts distinguished online learning based on the time perspective and atmosphere. Borup et al., (2011) & Ng (2007) differentiate online learning into synchronous and asynchronous based on the time perspective and mode of interaction. In contrast, Perveen (2016); Shin & Kang (2017) distinguished online learning into three learning environments they are synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid learning (synchronous and asynchronous). The researcher focuses on synchronous online learning. Synchronous learning takes place instantaneously electronically (Perveen, 2016). Salmon (2004) also asserted that synchronous online learning is similar to face to face traditional classroom, which the participants can access, interact with others and collaborate in real-time using the internet in different places. It is in line with Chen et al., (2005); Gudea (2008); Peachey (2017); Stanley (2017) study that synchronous form provides interaction in real-time with the participants by means of video conferencing and online chat in a different place. We can infer that synchronous online learning is a learning which interchanges face to face traditional classroom and the members communicate with others by using the internet.

Nowadays, we know various synchronous online learning tools. There are Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Twitter and etc. In fact, the researcher found that Google Meet is applied in teaching learning process and it is considered as a good platform to support teaching learning process. Google Meet is well-known as synchronous online learning tool in the education context. Google Meet is a media that can support teaching learning process and shift traditional into online learning. There are some previous studies that elaborate it with mathematic (Lugo-Armenta & Pino-Fan, 2021) (Widodo, 2017); basic science (Septantiningtyas et al., 2021); early childhood education (Timmons et al., 2021); performing arts education (Simamora, 2020); direct vocal learning (Silviska & Latifah, 2021).

Google Meet is one of the synchronous online learning tools. It is formerly known as Google Hangouts. It is in the form of secure virtual meetings and video calling with each other from anywhere with internet access which has a duration limit of 300 hours. It is now integrated with Gmail. Google Meet features: (1) it easily views all scheduled meetings for the day and joins the meeting with just a tap. It is directly from the Gmail mobile app or Meets App. (2) the people who only have unique code can join Google Meet. (3) It can share a screen to present documents, spreadsheets, presentations, or other browser tabs. (4) The host can deny entry and remove users

during calls or video conferencing. (5) It can host video meetings with 250 people, depending on the selected service plan. Specifically, the lecturer uses Google Meet to supports teaching learning process because it runs successfully in remote area. In the interview, she said that Google Meet can be accessed in unstable internet connection and expends small quota internet, so they still can connect to the others without worrying about kicked out from the class session. Google Meet has secure system in online session. Besides that, Google Meet also offers user-friendly setup and low-priced cost to consume (Ironsi, 2021).

Aforementioned, Google Meet can display documents and share a screen that is easy to use. Like in a real classroom, Google Meet can be a tool to teach reading that connects between the teacher and the students. It is essential to master reading skills because the students need to comprehend written text (Beard, 2021; Nation, 2019) using their background knowledge (Elleman & Oslund, 2019; Smith et al., 2021; Soto et al., 2019) independently (Bates et al., 2016) and effectively (Karimi & Dastgoshadeh, 2018). Synchronous online learning using Google Meet is expected to help the students develop their reading ability autonomously and efficiently in a pandemic situation.

Most recent studies have probed about synchronous online learning using Google Meet. Google Meet gives an abundant impact in teaching and learning and is considered effective and efficient for online distance education (Martinez-Nuñez et al., 2016; Papadakis et al., 2018). Other previous studies prove that online platform provides satisfying learning experience (Al-Maroof et al., 2020; He & Huang, 2017; Ironsi, 2021; Martinez-Nuñez et al., 2016). Unlike them, Fakhruddin (2019); Hsu (2019); Nehe (2021); Rusmawan et al., (2021) investigate Google Meet as learning tool which improve the students' speaking and writing activity. Since, there are still limited studies that focus on investigating students' perception of synchronous online learning using Google Meet from previous literature and research. Therefore, this research filled the gap by examining the students' perception of synchronous online learning using Google Meet, especially in ESP context and specific skill, reading which covered cognitive, affective, and conative aspects.

2. METHODS

This research used the qualitative case study to investigate a phenomenon in a profoundly detailed description (Yin, 2018). The data was taken from questionnaires and interviews based on the adaptation theory from perception (Schiffman & Wisenbilt, 2019), synchronous online learning (Chen et al., 2005), and reading (Aebersold & Field (1997); Grabe & Stoller (2013); Grellet (1981)). The questionnaire consisted of 25 question items which were done using Google Form. The semi-structured interview confirmed what the researcher got through the questionnaire previously. To answer the research question, the writer formulated the following questions "what are the students' perceptions of synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading class?"

The research participants were 18 Electrical engineering students who took English classes in the first semester. There were four women and fourteen men in the class who were 18-19 years old. The selection of the participants was conducted purposively in regards to some reasons such as class participation and willingness. Six participants became the respondents voluntarily in the interview session. The interview was conducted for 20 up to 30 minutes for each participant. The interview was done using WhatsApp Call because it could not be done directly face to face due to the pandemic situation. The interview was done using Bahasa Indonesia to understand better the information given by the interviewee. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data using the Interactive Model of Data Analysis from Miles et al., (2014). The analysis covered data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing/verification. First, the data condensation was done by simplifying the data. Then, the data display was done by tabulating data to get conclusions. The last conclusion drawing was done by interpreting the data.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated how ESP students perceived synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading. The information gathered from the questionnaire and the interviews were originated in the components of perception, which covers cognitive, affective, and conative aspects (Schiffman & Wisenbilt, 2019). Examining students' perceptions can get a more sophisticated understanding of different knowledge claims and construct personal interpretation based on the evidence (Campbell et al., 2001).

Cognitive Component

The cognitive component is related to the individual's cognition of the object or condition they acquire for their experience and other sources (Schiffman & Wisenbilt, 2019). This knowledge is expressed as belief. In other words, a person believes that an object or condition has or does not have the qualities.

Table 1. The Cognitive Component

No.	Indicator Cognitive	Percentage
1.	The students think that teacher creates suitable reading materials	100%
2.	The students get better understanding in synchronous online learning	100%
3.	The students think that they can get better scores in synchronous online learning than face to face learning	78%
4.	The students can identify topic of the reading text easily in synchronous online learning	100%
5.	The students can detect main idea of the text easily in synchronous online learning	94%
6.	The students can identify explicit information easily in synchronous online learning	89%
7.	The students can recognize implicit information easily in synchronous online learning	72%
8.	The students can find reference in the text easily in synchronous online learning.	94%
9.	The students can clarify contextual meaning of the word/phrase easily in synchronous online learning	72%
10.	The students think looking at classmates' works will help to improve the quality of the own work	89%
11.	The students can reflect what they have learned during teaching learning process	94%

The students had positive cognition in synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading from the questionnaire above. When the researcher asked about the familiarity of synchronous online learning, two of them knew about it, and the rest of them knew only the term of online learning. They defined it as a kind of distance learning shared using online platforms like distance e-learning using Zoom and WhatsApp group without learning face to face.

They all thought they got the suitable material from the teacher who was appropriate for their needs and major, Electrical Engineering. Participant 2,"I think the teacher provided and taught us suitable reading material dealing with electrical, so I can learn much more and feel engaged". (Participant 2. Interview. January 2 2022). Selvaraj et al., (2021) marked the teacher's need to create the learning process more engaging and stimulating and involve helping relieve students' uncertainties during online learning. Dealing with the difficulty level, they said that the teacher taught medium text, but there was a statement from Participant 2: "I think I need longer texts and

more complex than the teacher provided". (Participant 2. Interview. January 2 2022). Not all students have a similar capability in reading, so the teacher provided the medium text as reading material. The teacher's intention was to deliver material that was easy to understand and enrich their knowledge from the reading material.

The students thought they better understood synchronous online learning than traditional learning because they can directly browse what they do not know without asking the teacher or the others. However, not all of them thought they got better scores because it depended on their task. Few of them sometimes believed that learning face to face in class could not be replaceable with online learning. Dhawan (2020) asserted that synchronous online learning could not replace a teacher, but it could develop instruction. It was affirmed by Participant 3: "Face to face learning is more favorable than synchronous online learning because the existence of the teacher and my friends are supported the learning process." (Participant 3. Interview. January 6 2022).

In synchronous online learning, it can ease them to find terms or reading aspects. All of them identified the topic of reading material quickly. Most of them can also easily identify the text's main idea and explicit information. If they have difficulty identifying the main idea, the teacher showed where it is, either in front of the paragraph, in the middle, or behind the paragraph. If they still get difficulty identifying explicit information, they can access the Internet to ease them to translate what they do not know. Henry et al., (2014) stated that online learning offered greater accessibility and flexibility anywhere. On the contrary, they still have difficulty identifying implicit information, so the teacher asked them to reread the text and gave those hints/clues. They did not get difficulty in identifying the reference of the text. Reference is related to pronouns and discourse markers. Nevertheless, the students sometimes have difficulty clarifying the contextual meaning of the word/phrase in the text. Then, the teacher gave the synonym of that unknown word and linked it to a simpler context.

On the other side, most of them believed that exploring other's work can improve their work quality. The students can rate their work and crosscheck it. Hrastinski (2009) argued that this concept is closely related to the sense of community and knowledge building community. It is complex and depends on how each is defined. It was shown that Participant 1: "I am confident enough with my capability, so I do not need to explore my friends' work." (Participant 1. Interview. December 31 2021). Last, almost everyone can reflect on what they learned on that day because the teacher always provided the understandable-related materials with their major.

As explained before, we can assume that synchronous online learning benefits for students' cognition. Here, the students had increased their reading capability. The teacher provided materials that were appropriate to leverage the students' reading skills. So, the students understood the material quickly and autonomously. Besides that, the students could share thoughts with the others whether among them had difficulty identifying the parts of the reading material. It showed that synchronous online learning could activate the prior knowledge about the topic delivered and convey a deep understanding of the material.

Affective Component

The affective component is related to the individual's emotions and feeling about the activities (Schiffman & Wisenbilt, 2019). These are reflected evaluations because they rate the activity as good or bad.

Table 2. The Affective Component

No	Indicator Affective	Percentage
1.	The students feel this course provide a good learning environment	100%
2.	The students get a better learning experience in synchronous online learning	72%
3.	The students are motivated to be active in the learning process	78%
4.	The students feel that synchronous online learning is effective	94%
5.	The students feel very important and enough satisfied joining synchronous online learning	100%
6.	The students tend to be cooperative during teaching learning process	83%
7.	The students face problems during teaching learning process	83%
8.	The students can finish the assignment enthusiastically	78%

We know from the questionnaire above that the students had positive feelings in synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading. All of them agreed that synchronous online learning provided a good learning environment. So, they got a better learning experience, which was new for them. Terhune (2015) linked that any new technology should be considered a pedagogical tool in the education use context. The students should be trained to use it as a tool for language learning and prioritize for educational purposes if already used by students. Sanford (2017) reported that synchronous online learning presented a new pedagogical paradigm for the students who had experienced only traditional face-to-face courses for their entire educational experience.

Then, a third of them did not have a better learning experience in synchronous online learning; they did not get a social-emotional environment which means they felt less social interaction and social presence. They sometimes felt shy during the learning process. On the contrary, some felt happy because they could solve their problems easily by accessing the Internet. They felt synchronous online learning was effectively used in a pandemic situation because it reduced Corona virus spread among the students. Participant 1: "synchronous online learning saves energy and time without preparing to go to campus from home. It was also low budget". (Participant 1. Interview. December 31 2021). Likewise, James (2002) stated that applying online classes had numerous benefits, such as lower cost of transportation, saving time, and easily accessible even in rural areas. Dhawan (2020) also asserted that online learning gave strengths such as time flexibility, location flexibility, direct feedback, and accommodating many audiences.

All the students felt satisfied joining synchronous online learning, reflecting their motivation to be active and cooperative in the learning process. Morris et al., (2005) reported that the online environment was essential to successful online learning. The better the online environment, the more satisfied they are active in the class. They were also encouraged to finish the assignment enthusiastically by synchronous online learning.

Although they felt satisfied and motivated, they also found difficulty in the learning process. The researcher found three kinds of personal, environmental, and technological problems. Participant 6: "attending synchronous online learning is uncomfortable, but sometimes I get headaches and eye irritation because I spent much time on the desktop due to online class." (Participant 6. Interview. December 30 2021). Moreover, Participants 1 "when I am asked to read aloud, sometimes I felt anxious because I found unfamiliar words/vocabularies, and worried about reading effects, such as the other students would laugh." (Participant 1. Interview. December 31 2021). Participant 4: "when I am asked to read in Google Meet, sometimes I feel unconfident because I am afraid of making errors".

(Participant 4. Interview. January 5 2022). On the contrary, when they were asked to read silently, they felt enjoy and confident. Al Faruq (2019) noted that reading anxiety was more difficult to recognize; the students feel uncertainty when reading because many written words are different from spoken forms. Silent reading can reduce students' anxiety and reduce a negative evaluation.

Furthermore, the researcher found environmental problems. Participant 5: "sometimes I get distraction from my environment such as baby crying." (Participant 5. Interview. January 5 2022). Most of them did synchronous online learning at house or boarding house; it might make them uncomfortable joining the class. They sometimes heard people make noise or baby crying. Moreover Participant 2: "when I scheduled synchronous online learning, I told people at home/ boarding house, but they forgot to wake me up or set the alarm to join the class, so he was absent or late at that time". (Participant 2. Interview. January 2 2022).

Unlike personal and environmental problems, there were also found the technical problem. They sometimes face that the microphone or laptop get trouble. They also encountered the network being disrupted, and the electricity went out. Likewise, Selvaraj et al., (2021), network connectivity was the issue and the students in rural areas mostly faced issues of bad network coverage. They need to get a proper signal to join synchronous online learning. Participant 3: "I have limited data connection, so it is the problem joining the class." (Participant 3. Interview. January 6 2022). Similarly, Selvaraj et al., (2021) found that the inability to buy technology such as phones or laptops and internet service also became a barrier during synchronous online learning. Hence, the teacher usually gives the solution by delivering material before joining synchronous online learning.

As mentioned above, we can see that synchronous online learning also strengthens their emotions. We understand that it can be either positive or negative. They can be better in sense of community because of their activeness in synchronous online learning. And also, it needs for the teacher design material that is more eyes catching to reduce the personal health problem without making heavy material.

Conative Component

The conative component deals with the probability that the individual will perform a certain action or behavior in a certain way to the object (Schiffman & Wisenbilt, 2019). The conative component itself expresses the individual's intention to do.

Table 3 The Conative Component

No.	Indicator Conative	Percentage
1.	This learning encourages communication and interaction between the students and the teacher, and among students during teaching learning process	100%
2.	The students are stimulated to do online discussion to share ideas and thoughts.	94%
3.	The students are active in group discussions and synchronous online learning using Google Meet during the teaching-learning process	72%
4.	The students think that synchronous online learning helps to use Internet sources more efficiently	94%
5.	The students get clear instruction to do the task from the teacher	100%
6.	The students study more through synchronous online learning	56%

The researcher found a positive act response in synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading from the questionnaire above. Since synchronous online learning provided a good learning

environment, they were motivated to communicate and interact. McBain et al., (2016) agreed that synchronous online learning leads to increase engagement / social interaction. The more they engaged the more active they were in the learning process. Finkelstein (2006) marked that synchronous online learning would be empty and echo space without engagement and active participation. All the students and the teacher communicated when the lesson began or was postponed. This is confirmed by a study proved by Wolverton (2018) that synchronous online learning provides time flexibility because the teacher and the students discuss the schedule before the course. Besides that, in synchronous online learning interaction, they got direct feedback from the teacher (Bagheri & Zenouzagh, 2021). It is revealed by McIsaac et al., (1999) that direct feedback is important in online learning settings, where students feel companionable and pleased while getting direct feedback.

Not all the students were stimulated to do online discussions. Respond from Participant 6: "sometimes I do not do online discussion because I feel uncomfortable. The other students disrespected me." (Participant 6. Interview. December 30 2021). Then it proved that a third of them were not active in online discussion. A safe environment for sharing and a sense of community is essential in synchronous online learning. Finkelstein (2006) asserts a sense of community in which the students of the class trust each other and feel willing and contented enough to contribute to sharing ideas. It is in line with respond Participant 4: "I feel more comfortable creating a sense of community and cooperation by small online discussion after class by making three or four of a group." (Participant 4. Interview. January 5 2022). We can reflect that synchronous online learning could encourage the students to make a small online discussion to learn together better. Arends (2015) described that discussion did not only help to extend the students' knowledge increase their ability to think and communicate, but it also raised involvement and engagement in the class.

Hrastinski (2008) stated that synchronous communication also increases motivation but reduces the ability to process information. They communicate with the teacher without feeling afraid and shy, but they think they still need improvement. Then, the interaction among the students was better than in face to face learning. As evidenced in the interviews, Participant 3: "I feel braver in synchronous online learning because the teacher gives me immediate feedback and easily talks with the others." (Participant 3. Interview. January 6 2022). It was reflected on they were active doing online discussions while the learning process was going on or after the lesson to share the ideas and thoughts.

As explained in the previous paragraph, the online discussion offered many benefits such as representing knowledge of key concepts, encouraging higher-order critical thinking skills, boosting peer interaction and teamwork, stimulating thoughtful reflection, doing social interaction and community construction, boosting students' learning performances and boosting student-created discussion topics (Ragupathi, 2018; Sutherland-Smith, 2002). When we talked about the effectiveness of synchronous online discussions, most of the participants believed that this way of teaching was quite effective in this pandemic situation. The online discussion allowed the students and the lecturer to interact with discussing materials and keep physical distancing at the same time as this mode of learning does not require close-range physical interaction.

The teacher gave clear instruction in synchronous online learning, so the students did not need to ask more. The teacher gave a slide presentation, and the instruction used understandable language. The students could use the internet sources more efficiently by synchronous online learning. Consequently, half more of them need to study more through synchronous online learning to complete their curiosity about the material.

As mentioned above, we can see that synchronous online learning also supports their behavior. Synchronous online learning provides an effective and a comfortable environment to foster their social interaction. They are relatively stimulated to be active in the class. It also drives them to do online discussion after class end.

From the finding above, it can be seen that the research answered the research question dealing with students' perception toward synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading class.

The students have good responses in term of cognitive, affective, and conative. The students have increased their reading ability. The students feel better and more comfortable in synchronous online learning. Also, it promotes students' engagement in the synchronous online learning in reading class.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined how ESP university students perceived synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading. The finding of this study approved that the students showed positive responses towards the implementation of synchronous online learning in reading. The students' reading skill was improved when they learned reading in synchronous online learning using Google Meet, such as in identifying the topic, the text information explicitly and implicitly, clarifying the contextual meaning of the text, and etc. Although, it was found some challenges which they perceived during synchronous online learning, such as atmosphere, technical, and personal problems. The implication of this study relates to retaining the teaching learning process of synchronous online learning using Google Meet in reading. The institution and the government should support and promote the effectiveness of synchronous online learning by improving their learning and providing free Internet access for all students. This will be a saluted way that to equalize the gap created by poor internet connections in synchronous online learning. Thus, this study provides valuable insight, but the number of participants is limited. The other research is likely to cover various major participants and report the viewpoint of ESP students so that the specific problems and the solution for implementing synchronous online learning can be identified.

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