Students' Perception of the Use of Video Conference Application (Zoom Cloud Meetings) in Fostering EFL Learners' Speaking Ability on Speech

Muhammad Muklas[1], Fitria wardani[*2], Jelita[3], Hardiansyah[4]
[1,2,3,4] Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Nurul Huda
* E-mail: elisafarihah@gmail.com

Abstract

This thesis is entitled "Students' Perception on the Use of Video Conference Application (Zoom Cloud Meetings) in Fostering EFL Learners' Speaking Ability Speech". The presented study aimed to find out students' perception of using a video conference application (Zoom Cloud Meetings) in the virtual speech class of Nurul Huda University Sukaraja Buay Madang Oku Timur. The method used in this study was the descriptive qualitative method. The results of this study were: that using Zoom Cloud Meetings as an online platform for conducting English speech classes was adequately effective, students also showed a positive response to using the Zoom Cloud Meetings application. So that online learning can run smoothly. There are only a few differences in activities that happened during the English speech virtual classroom and English speech conventional classroom, the problems that often occur during the class are poor internet connection and internet quota, and some solutions implemented make it better for the students to looking for a strategic place with the stable internet signal inside, sharing each notes of the material, and decided to use Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) in their houses.

Keywords: Perception, Video Conference Application, Speaking Ability.

INTRODUCTION

In English, four skills must be mastered: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. One of the most crucial abilities it acquired is speaking, since it enables us to interact with others and convey our emotions. Speaking abilities can be divided into formal and informal speaking abilities, and we utilize both types of speaking abilities throughout life in various circumstances (Sadiku, L. M. 2015). Being capable of communicating fluently in foreign languages, especially English is one of the biggest dreams of every single English learner. That is why speaking is assumed as one of the most crucial English skills for all EFL learners. In Indonesia, English has been considered one of the other substantial languages besides the Indonesian language, because, in this era, English is used in many sectors of this nation including social, cultural, economic, political, education, and others, so that, good communication skill in English is an essential part of daily life. There has never been a time in history when a language was more widely spoken than English is today (McKay, 2016).

Communication becomes effective when a communicator is informed enough to talk properly, simply, plainly, honestly, and dynamically. In a society, communication is essential for moving people, things, and ideas from one place to another, as well as for maintaining close, empathetic connections. Therefore, among the four English skills, speaking is one of the most important components of effective communication. Speaking also appears to help us learn new things because, when we speak properly, we have a greater understanding of what we are talking about. Speaking proficiency is the most important skill to acquire when learning a foreign or second language, claims Rao (2019). Speaking is considered to be the most important of the four essential language skills when learning a foreign language.

In addition, An English teacher should be of good character and have engaging teaching materials if they want to make learning and teaching speaking effective. Media is a tool that is used to help students learn their lesson objectives. The function of the media is crucial in this virtual learning environment to ensure that learning activities in the classroom run smoothly. In the process of teaching and learning, the media is crucial. The media's primary function is to spread messages in general

(Yuhartanti et al., 2018). Web-based learning, e-learning, computer-based learning, online learning, and virtual video conference learning are all terms used to describe the use of computers and the Internet to enhance reading education and learning. The most common way to do this is to name teaching methods using ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

Moreover, students need to adapt to online speaking classes. Several researchers have conducted research related to this research. The first researcher was Alfadda & Mahdi (2021). The purpose of his study was to investigate the relationship between TAM characteristics and Zoom usage for language acquisition, as well as how gender and experience affect technology use. The study's findings revealed a favorable relationship between the students' views and behavioral intentions and the actual use of Zoom. Ermawatti came in second (2020). Because they offer a different way to complete learning activities from home, the study demonstrated the effectiveness of the applications used in online learning. The WhatsApp app is also the most effective, practical, and cost-effective app to use in a pandemic, according to almost all students questioned. In their most recent study, Agung et al. (2020) identified three main obstacles to performing online learning: the availability and sustainability of internet connections, the accessibility of educational media, and the compatibility of tools for accessing media. The researcher is confident that a variety of perspectives, including the advantages and disadvantages of modifying the reading learning system, particularly when using online learning media apps, will become clear from the examples provided. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to learn how students feel about utilizing the Zoom Cloud Meeting program during online speaking lessons. But then, the researcher chose Zoom Cloud Meetings as the application used for the research, because the first time learning and teaching activity from home happened, the most used video conference application is Zoom Cloud Meetings. It was deemed successful and advantageous for the students in Zoom Cloud Meetings. The Zoom Cloud Meetings Meet learning tool may help students and teachers grow and increase their knowledge, leading to a more enjoyable and effective learning experience. Encourage students to use the Zoom Cloud Meetings Meet app since it provides a way for them to collaborate, particularly when receiving group tasks, despite time or location constraints to physically meet (Erna, M. et al., 2021).

The term video conference is used to describe a system where two or more participants in different locations can interact while both seeing and hearing each other in real time with the help of specialized equipment and a high-speed internet connection (Augestad, K. M. et al., 2009). Video conferencing is becoming more accessible nowadays, particularly in the field of distance learning, because of the continual improvement in the quality of online transmission and the decline in the cost of computer equipment. It is important to note that videoconferencing notably differs from text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) since it allows for audiovisual channels in the interaction, even though it is placed inside the e-learning setting. The ability to receive nonverbal cues that promote a connection and, most significantly, the immediate and spontaneous nature of replies are thus retained through video conferencing, placing pressure on the participants to process information and produce output in real-time (Lee 2007). Because of those explanations, the learning activity of speaking English, primarily, is considered to be better when using the video conference application.

It can be assumed to be face-to-face even when it's not, the Zoom Cloud Meetings program is particularly popular in speaking instruction. The options for students and teachers to continue studying and speaking remotely to using either the discussion approach in group chats or face-to-face online using video conferencing tools. Given that face-to-face observation of the child's gestures, style, and emotions are some extremely significant parts of a speaking assessment, the video conferencing program is undoubtedly the finest option (Ismawati et al., 2020).

This phenomenon inspired the writer to conduct the current study, as the importance of continuing to learn to speak English necessitates students studying online. Because we live in a modern era, we also have to be able to take advantage of internet technology to make learning easier when circumstances make it impossible to study face-to-face. After the COVID-19 pandemic, many learning

methods used media via Zoom meetings as an intermediary for teaching and learning activities. Zoom meeting media were also still used even after the COVID-19 pandemic ended, which attracted the attention of researchers researching the opinions of students who did Zoom meetings. This is a challenging thing, where students and teachers need face-to-face learning for class efficiency and the achievement of these learning standards. As a solution, teachers and students implement face-to-face virtual learning online, which is certainly not easy, especially when faced with the problem of internet connection and internet quota, a crucial problem in online learning (Paechter, M., et al., 2010).

In this study, the writer took the fourth semester of the English Education Program at Nurul Huda University Sukaraja for the subject of the research. The focus is on the student's perception of the use of video conference applications (Zoom Cloud meetings) in fostering ELL learners' speaking ability on speech. The writer realizes that it was very important to make the steps of this study problem, before conducting the research as the following:

What is the student's perception of the use of Zoom Cloud Meetings in their speech virtual class?

METHODOLOGY

The writer applied a descriptive-qualitative approach in this study. According to Moleong (2005:3), qualitative is the study whose subject is discussed orally and in writing, leading the writer to infer that the study is descriptive and qualitative. According to Endraswara (2011:5), a descriptive qualitative research approach is one in which findings are presented verbally, with the option of an image if desired. The effects of the data are shown by this form of qualitative descriptive analysis without any manipulation or other treatment methods. In addition, the Descriptive qualitative method is a data analysis technique using explanations in the form of sentences obtained from the results of the study (Batlajery, 2016).

In collecting the data for this study, the writer used the technique of data collection to study, the technique of collecting the data step they were:

1. Observation

The writer observed teaching and learning activities of English Speaking using Zoom Cloud Meetings for 2 consecutive meetings. In this case, the writer examined the use of Zoom Cloud Meetings as a substitute medium for face-to-face offline between lecturer and student in teaching English, especially in speaking skills of speech. In addition, there are some preparations done by the writer, such as making sure she has a stable internet connection and making an observation list so that the writer knows what to observe.

2. Interviewing the Students

The writer interviewed the students of the social studies program to first find out what obstacles they faced during the distance learning process, what media used, how the learning activities were, especially what the students felt during learning, especially on the English course. The writer interviewed 17 students one of whom used the media smartphone, the questions consisted of 14 questions and intended to identify students' perceptions of the use of video conference applications (Zoom Cloud meetings). The following questions are adapted from a book with the title "*Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*" by Dr. Farida Nugrahani, M.Hum. (2014:129).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the writer conducted the study at Nurul Huda University Buay Madang Oku Timur. This study was done for ten days, from the twenty-ninth of July until the seventh of August 2023, using two kinds of instruments, observation and interview. This sub-chapter explained the findings of the study.

Students' perception of using video conference application (Zoom Cloud Meetings) in fostering EFL learners' speaking ability on speech.

Based on the observation and interviews students conducted from the twenty-ninth of July until the seventh of August 2023, the writer found several evidence of the operative on using the video conferences application which is Zoom Cloud Meetings.

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To answer the first question of the study, the writer interviewed the participants with fourteen questions, including their experiences, feelings, and difficulties. The first question the participants gave was how effective is the use of the Zoom application in learning speech. All participants answered that the Zoom Cloud Meetings application in the speech virtual class is adequately effective for supporting their online teaching or learning without having to meet directly with each other. Furthermore, the participants said that using Zoom Meeting was more flexible and easier because, in Zoom Meeting, the participants or the teacher presented the material easily, saw their friends and teacher virtually, and could ask and answer directly. Moreover, as time went by, the participants tried to respond, ask, and answer the question to a teacher using several features in Zoom Meeting. They think online learning was adequately effective, and Zoom Meeting was an appropriate medium to support the learning process. Furthermore, Zoom meetings can enhance their speaking because they feel confident to speak when their friend is not around them. As Participant A explained,

"I think it's adequately effective because we don't need too much energy and money to be able to study speech as usual, so even at home we can still study and share with classmates".

The next question the writer asked the participants was, " Which do you prefer, learning speech face-to-face or virtual using Zoom Cloud Meeting?". It was found that the participants enjoyed using Zoom meetings for learning. The students mentioned that they can use Zoom Meeting everywhere, every time and they feel comfortable with that. However, participant C said it's more worth it face-to-face because we can directly monitor the activities of the audience, if we use Zoom sometimes the audience's face is visible but not necessarily listening or paying attention. He added that he is often constrained by the internet network which can hamper learning. To overcome the situation, he pointed out some strategies, such as looking for a strategic place with a good connection to the internet. As can also be seen from the interview the students seemed to enjoy during learning process and they followed the lesson from beginning to end of the class.

Next, the question was asked to determine the advantages of learning virtual speech using Zoom Meeting. In this context, the writer saw that learning using Zoom Meetings can shorten time and be more practical. However, the participants felt the benefits are many, especially like training our critical thinking so the benefits of Zoom Cloud Meetings in virtual now are certainly the speech itself, like the speaker itself, it's easier and the nervousness is reduced because we don't meet in person. After all, if it's virtual we just see a computer or cell phone, the term is to enjoy it and then we don't need to be complicated for costume and others, if it's face-to-face, we make prepare everything from the beginning. By this time, the participants can study at home so it can be more comfortable and more efficient.

The next question the writer asked the students was, "Do these strengths help you achieve speech learning standards?". It was found that the students can gain more confidence when speech use Zoom meetings and students can hone their skills more, which will reach the learning standards. Furthermore, the students added that using Zoom Meetings is very helpful when a lecturer or student has other activities that result in not being able to attend campus, so with this Zoom Meeting, learning that was previously constrained by other activities can be completed by the learning standards.

The following question was given to find out the student's activity during the online speech class through the video conference application (Zoom Cloud Meetings). Due to the results of interviewing the students, 17 students said that the activities that happened in the virtual classroom were almost the same as the offline class activities. The teacher usually began the class with a small discussion of today's topic by explaining what lesson they were going to learn that day. Besides, the teacher provides a sharing session as always to make the students ask about their difficulties with the lessons. After that, there is frequently practice session where the students show their ability so, the teacher could see their development day by day. However, it could not run maximally during online classes because of the limited time they have. The duration of the lesson hours is shortened because of some considerations such as internet access and class effectiveness. As Participant B explained,

"For online learning activities, the activities and techniques are almost the same as face-to-face learning, such as lecturers explaining the material first and then practice, but the time is more limited and the delivery is shorter and also the practice is faster so the obstacle is in time, but both get the material".

Next, the question was asked to determine the obstacles to learning speech through a video conference application (Zoom Cloud Meetings). In this context, the writer saw that the obstacles to learning using Zoom Meetings are the weight of the Zoom application's capacity if it is installed on a mobile phone or laptop can cause slowdown or lag on our phone or laptop. The more famous the application, the more companies will burden the application, if the features are really good and it is complete. Furthermore, the students added that the obstacles to using Zoom Meetings on internet data are because it consumes a lot of internet data when using this Zoom Meeting and there are also frequent signal interruptions during the implementation of learning. As participant C explained,

"The only obstacles are signal and camera interference. Indeed, when carrying out this zoom must require an adequate signal, because when the signal is disturbed, of course, everything will be disturbed, such as the sound will not appear and the image will disappear".

Another question about perception was given to find out the solutions that have been and are being optimally pursued to minimize and overcome these obstacles in speech class using Zoom meetings. The students mentioned that prefer to use Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) in their houses to minimize the problems caused by signal or look for a strategic place with a good connection to the internet inside. As participant D explained,

"if we are doing online learning we should be able to choose a place where the signal or network in the area is smooth so that learning activities run properly".

However, the students used many features to minimize and overcome these obstacles in speech class. The student said that it solved the obstacles by asking their friends to share the notes and the materials of the day so that they could be shared and learned by the students who lack connection in the classroom. As participant D explained,

"The solution is the PowerPoint material is sent to the group if not so eeee... make a summary and then send it to the group. then usually some friends often share their notes, who like to note important points and often share them with the group so that they can be studied repeatedly".

The last question was given to the participants after the solution was implemented, did the learning effectiveness increase significantly? The students said these solutions can significantly improve the effectiveness of learning because it has been resolved with the solutions, we have tried so that we can access it without any difficulties.

During the interview, the students gave positive responses to implementing Zoom meetings for learning in the speech class. All students said Zoom Meeting was a good media platform for learning and was adequately effective. It was not only for learning English subject but could also apply to other subjects. It also helped the lecturer to make it easier in the teaching and learning process. Zoom Meeting was a good choice whether the lecturer could not attend the class. In addition, the features should be improved for a limited time in using Zoom Meeting, extend more students and the amount of quota that must be spent. The other participants shared the same opinion that the features in Zoom Meeting should be improved as well because when using Zoom Meeting there was limited time. It took only 40 minutes to get free and they had to spend much money and internet quota to get premium features.

According to the finding above, it could be interpreted as knowing the student's perception using a video conference application (Zoom Cloud Meetings) in fostering EFL learners' speaking ability on speech during online learning, the activities that happen during the speech virtual class by Zoom Cloud Meetings, and the problems and solutions of having a speech online class by Zoom Cloud Meetings.

Based on the interview results, the students perceived that using Zoom Meeting brought some benefits, especially for their effort in learning speech class. The most mentioned benefits were gaining self-confidence, improving speaking skills, and becoming more active in practicing speaking. According

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to (Khasanah & Syarifah, 2021), Zoom Cloud Meetings is an application that can be used to carry out meeting or discussion activities together such as meeting face to face without having to meet physically. Subsequently, based on the student's answers, Zoom Meeting as media for online learning is adequately effective in helping them improve their speaking skills. It can be seen from students' responses that they are becoming more active in answering and responding when the teacher asks a question or explains the material. In addition, using Zoom Cloud Meetings can support communication needs wherever and whenever you are.

Furthermore, after the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and lecturers still use the Zoom Cloud Meetings application as a learning medium, because in addition to being a substitute for direct face-to-face learning, students also show a positive response to the use of the Zoom Cloud Meetings application. Knowing students' perceptions, it can be seen that Zoom Cloud Meetings media can be used as a learning medium. So that online learning can run smoothly.

Due to the findings above, most students prefer Zoom meetings for online learning because many features support their learning and teaching process. It was in line with Kang & Duong (2021) that using Zoom meetings for media learning becomes flexible and enjoyable. Zoom Meeting was their favorite platform rather than the other platform. Nevertheless, a few students said there is no significant difference between the activity in the offline class and the online class of speech. Both usually begin by discussing the lesson that could be learned in that session, and after that practicing is on the agenda. Some students said the differences between them are only the duration and learning standard, but otherwise, there is no any sharp opposite. Furthermore, the interaction among students could still run smoothly even though there is such limitation because of the connection. Otherwise, every single thing in the classroom happens just like usual.

On the other hand, there are some problems, for example, bad connections and internet quotas, that mostly happen to the students, chiefly in the English speech virtual class. This present study is supported by another previous research that emerged on the same matter. According to (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020) in their research entitled "EFL Classes Must Go Online! Teaching Activities and Challenges during COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia", in isolated and rural locations, internet coverage is still an issue. Some pupils reside in rural, mountainous, and distant places. To solve this matter, students who have a bad internet signal could move to the boarding house that is available for the students. In addition, learners share each note of the lessons so that even if they have trouble with their connection, they are still able to learn through the notes. By implementing this solution, the effectiveness level of the teaching and learning process increases step by step.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study conducted by the writer, the use of Zoom Cloud Meetings in the speech virtual class is adequately effective, the students perceived that using Zoom Meeting brought some benefits, especially for their effort in learning speech class. The most mentioned benefits were gaining self-confidence, improving speaking skills, and becoming more active in practicing speaking. Furthermore, after the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and lecturers still use the Zoom Cloud Meetings application as a learning medium, because in addition to being a substitute for direct face-to-face learning, students also show a positive response to the use of the Zoom Cloud Meetings application. So that online learning can run smoothly.

In addition, the activities that happen during online classes are almost the same as those in conventional classes. There are only a few differences such as duration and energizer. However, there are some obstacles happen during the classroom which is dominated by poor internet connection and internet quota that affect some matters such as broken voice, nonoptimal performance, and misunderstanding. These serious problems are solved in some ways, looking for a strategic place with a good internet connection inside, sharing lessons' notes, moving to the boarding house, and installing Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) in their houses to minimize the problems caused by signal.

Due to the study done in the speech virtual class of Nurul Huda University Sukaraja Oku Timur, the writer provides some suggestions the lecturer expected to give such various activities in the classroom for the agendas during the classroom could be multifarious. The lecturer was expected to give the students assignments to exercise students ability in English speech, chiefly in online learning where the lecturers could not maximally supervise the students. The homework could be oral or written such as video projects, English speech text, or audio projects by the lessons given of the day. The lecturer was expected to guide students to give peer feedback on each English speech practice so that they could learn independently through each experience and mistake because this way could also improve students' critical thinking and concentration on the object they learn about. Students were expected to have the initiative to learn and practice by themselves outside of the classroom to increase their capability in public speaking, especially English speech. Students were expected to look for more references in English speech to make their performances in English speech better and give them a more extensive point of view of something they want to deliver in their speech.

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