

**LEARNING, BELIEFS, AND CHALLENGES: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON
SCHOLOGY IN ENGLISH LEARNING**

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Abstract

The use of technology becomes more ubiquitous in English teaching and learning due to the availability of various digital learning media in this 21st century. Some English teachers have started to extend their classroom activities through e-learning using some online applications. *Schoology* as one of the Learning Management Systems (LMS) has become increasingly popular among teachers in providing online learning environment to support students in learning English. This paper aims to present a brief review on *Schoology*, which has been widely used by educators. Through a post survey, the writers collect the data to describe students' experiences in using *Schoology*. In this case, *Schoology* was used in blended learning setting to support students in learning English. The participants of this study were University students of English education program. Result indicated that *Schoology* helped the students in learning English, created new atmosphere in the classroom, and gave the opportunity to passive students to deliver their opinion through online learning. Overall, it can be concluded that in using LMS or other applications, the teacher should consider about time management and ensure that in teaching and learning process the students are not just struggle in using the application but also learn the language.

Keywords: Student's perspective, *Schoology*, learning media, English classroom, blended learning.

Learning, Beliefs, and Challenges: Students' Perspectives on
Schoolgy in English Learning

Recently, the use of technology in teaching English as Foreign Language becomes more ubiquitous in this 21st century especially by employing variety of online applications which provide a facility to connect people around the world to communicate each others. In this digital era, young people spend their time in front of their gadgets on various social media such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube* and so forth. From this case, the English lecturer can utilize this phenomenon to improve students' language skills through social media. Koper & Tattersall in De Jong et al. (2008) mention that the potential learning of mobile devices offers environment that flexible, rich and interactive learning, it is also accessible and easy to reach anyone and anywhere.

Another famous social media that focus on education is *Schoolgy* which established in 2009 has successfully driven the educators' attention as one of Learning Management Systems (LMS) for virtual class. Through this LMS, the lecturer can share the learning material, post the assignments, and give feedback to students in 24 hours. In addition, teaching with technologies will improve students' learning experience, recognize new net-based of communication technologies, and develop teaching methods by innovations (Kanuka & Rourke, 2013). The use of *Schoolgy* as blended learning media provides innovative and interactive environment that help the students reduce their boredom when learning in onsite classroom.

In order to implement it, the most common technique among the lecturers is blended learning which integrates face-to-face meeting class and online class. Stacey and Gerbic in Bawaneh (2011) state that learning performance and experience of the students can be enhanced by utilizing online resources which are integrated with traditional learning. While, Bawaneh

(2011) mentions blended learning approach needs study materials of hard copy, face-to-face meeting and communication via email, internet based message, and other online resources.

This paper was conducted at Salatiga State Institute of Islamic Studies in Indonesia which involved students of English department. The study began after the students finishing their English Language Intensive Study course in the first semester which their lecturer employed *Schoolgy* in teaching and learning process. The aim of this study is to get the information about students' opinion after using *Schoolgy* in learning English. Based on the explanation above, the researchers tried to analyze the implementation of *Schoolgy* as learning media for English classroom in blended learning setting based on the students' perspectives by using these three research problems, namely:

1. How popular is *Schoolgy* among students?
2. What are the strengths and the challenges of *Schoolgy* based on students' perspectives?
3. What are the *Schoolgy*'s impacts for students in learning English?

Blended Learning

Bawaneh (2011) mentions blended learning approach needs study materials of hard copy, face-to-face meeting and communication via email, internet based message, and other online resources. Vaughan et al. in Mtebe & Raphael (2013) state that the combination of learning management system, internet, other related technologies and face-to-face discussion allows the teacher to use variety instructional techniques. These also provide the teacher to achieve effective learning outcomes of the students. Blended learning environment also offers new

experiences that are not available in non-blended learning environment (Oliver & Trigwell in Jeffrey et al., 2014).

In addition, some practitioners in Kazu and Demirkoh (2014) mention that blended learning as two different combination of education models between traditional face to face learning and electronic learning that provides difference theories, methodologies and techniques of learning and the integration of e-learning which has improved with technology developments in order to provide interaction in the classroom. Delialioğlu (2012) mentions various resources such as multimedia and simulations taken from the internet in the terms of blended learning environment provide freedom for the students to study at their own way, opportunity among the students and the teacher to have discussion on the online material, laboratory activities, and the hands-on activities. Blended learning also eliminates the obstacles in time, place, and situational which it enables high quality of interaction among teachers and students (Kanuka et al, in Jeffery et al., 2014). Singh in Akkoyunlu & Soylu (2008) adds that blended learning focuses on learning achievement by transferring the “right” skill for the “right” person and by applying the “right” technologies of learning to monitor the “right” learning style at the “right” time.

Schoolgy

Schoolgy is also as popular as Facebook tool used by teachers (Wah et al., 2013). Irawan et al. (2017) state that Schoolgy is education application of free web-based that allows the teacher to provide lessons digitally. In addition, Indrayasa et al. (2015) mention that Schoolgy provides some features that is easy to use for the students just like another social media. It helps the teacher in managing learning and the students' outcomes including the students' assignments and quiz, the students' activities monitoring, and social activity facilitation. While, Wah et al. (2013) mention Schoolgy as Learning Management System of

free web-based learning. Schoology is used in university learning because it is accessible and it provides some features in social networking. Students are able to access Schoology application at www.schoology.com by using computer or download it in PlayStore or Appstore on smartphone of android. Schoology had received the title as the best educational apps in 2013, 2014, and 2015 by the CODiE Awards (Irawan, et al., 2017).

Method

Participants

There were 80 students of English Education Program as participant of this study. This paper employed survey as the research method. It used questionnaire as data collection techniques to obtain the information about students' perspectives after using *Schoology* in English Language Intensive Study course.

Assessments and Measures

English Language Intensive Study course is offered for the first semester students. The duration of class for each meeting was 100 minutes. The topics were divided into 14 meetings, 6 meetings for grammar, 6 meetings for language skills practice and 2 meetings for examination. In this case, the lecturer used *Schoology* as a tool to facilitate the students in online communication and discussion, submit the assignment, and share the learning sources.

There are three parts of survey that consists of 28 questions in students' survey to answer the research problems that mentioned before. The first part of survey, the researchers asked the students to answer "how popular *Schoology* among them?" After the lecturer used *Schoology* in teaching and learning process, the students filled in the survey and here is the students' opinion:

No		SD	D	A	SA
1.	I have been using Schoology before taking English Language Intensive Study course.	27.5 %	60 %	7.5 %	5 %
2.	This is my first time using Schoology in English Language Intensive Study course.	0 %	3.8 %	62.5 %	33.8 %
3.	I use Google to know and understand how to use	0 %	16.3 %	62.5 %	21.3 %

Schoology.					
4.	I ask my lecturer when I have difficulties in using <i>Schoology</i> .	0 %	7.5 %	61.3 %	31.3 %
5.	I think <i>Schoology</i> has similarity with <i>Facebook</i> when I use it.	2.5 %	28.8 %	57.5 %	11.3 %
6.	I found the difficulty when I used <i>Schoology</i> in learning activity.	3.8 %	57.5 %	35 %	3.8 %
7.	I always check <i>Schoology</i> notifications.	1.3 %	26.3 %	67.5 %	5 %
8.	My lecturer always uses <i>Schoology</i> in English Language Intensive Study course.	0 %	6.3 %	55 %	38.8 %

SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree.

The second part of survey aims to get the information about the strengths and challenges of *Schoology*. Below are the results from the survey:

No		SD	D	A	SA
9.	Submitting the assignment through <i>Schoology</i> does not take much time and money.	0 %	10 %	51.3 %	38.8 %
10.	I can access my learning material through <i>Schoology</i> .	0 %	6.2 %	60 %	33.8 %
11.	<i>Schoology</i> creates a new learning atmosphere in English Language Intensive Study course.	0 %	3.8 %	57.5 %	38.8 %
12.	The use of <i>Schoology</i> gives me more information about the utilization of digital media for English learning activity.	0 %	0 %	36.3 %	61.3 %
13.	The use of <i>Schoology</i> for online learning needs a strong Internet.	0 %	21.3 %	57.5 %	21.3 %
14.	The use of <i>Schoology</i> for online learning needs an adequate gadget (<i>smartphone</i> , pc)	0 %	23.8 %	53.8 %	22.5 %

SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree.

The last part of survey, the researchers not only asked the students about the impacts of the use of *Schoology* in learning English but also students' character after conducting blended learning. The first survey results of the *Schoology's* impacts in learning English are mentioned below:

No	SD	D	A	SA
15. Blended learning activity improved my reading skills.	0 %	8.8 %	68.8 %	22.5 %
16. Blended learning activity improved my writing skills.	0 %	5 %	73.8 %	21.3 %
17. Blended learning activity improved my speaking skills.	2.5 %	21.3 %	61.3 %	15 %
18. Blended learning activity improved my listening skills.	2.5 %	30 %	56.3 %	11.3 %
19. The online learning activity helps me in learning English language.	0 %	5 %	67.5 %	27.5 %
20. The face-to-face meeting activity helps me in learning English language.	0 %	1.3 %	55 %	43.8 %

SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree.

The next survey results are the students' attitude after participating in blended learning activity.

Below are some of the results:

No	SD	D	A	SA
21. I found a good balance between online and classroom learning activities.	0 %	7.5 %	67.5 %	25 %
22. I enjoy learning activities in blended learning.	0 %	2.5 %	72.5 %	25 %
23. Personally, I became more discipline after participating blended learning.	0 %	11.3 %	75 %	13.8 %
24. Personally, I became more active in this subject by using blended learning.	0 %	10 %	73.8 %	16.3 %
25. If I do not understand I have the freedom to ask my lecturers.	0 %	0 %	56.3 %	43.8 %
26. In the blended learning activities I have the freedom to interact with my lecturer both in online or offline.	0 %	3.8 %	65 %	31.3 %
27. I am more active in the face-to-face classroom than online classroom.	0 %	33.8 %	55 %	11.3 %
28. I am more active in the online classroom than face-to-face classroom.	0 %	50 %	38.8 %	11.3 %

SD: Strongly Disagree, D: Disagree, A: Agree, SA: Strongly Agree.

Results

Based on the research questions, there are three outcomes in this paper namely the popularity of *Schoolgy* among students, the strengths and the challenges of *Schoolgy* based on students'

perspectives, and the impacts of *Schoology* for students in learning English. The results of this study are mentioned below.

Outcome 1: How popular is *Schoology* among students?

According to the result of survey 96.3% the students used *Schoology* for the first time when they took English Language Intensive Study course in the first semester. Therefore, some students found the difficulties when they used it. To solve their problem, some students used Google to find tutorial on how to use *Schoology* and the others asked their lecturer to learn how to use *Schoology* in learning process. 68.8% of the students agreed that *Schoology* has similarity with *Facebook*. On the contrary, 31.3% of the students disagree with that statement because they unfamiliar with some features in *Schoology* which different from *Facebook*. Based on the interview, some students confused in submitting the assignment and joining discussion forum. Even though, the students still struggle to use *Schoology* where 72.5% of them always check their *Schoology* notification and 27.5% are rarely checking the notification because of the lack of gadget or internet connection. As a result, the researchers can conclude that *Schoology* still new for the students because some of them just know that *Schoology* looks like social media that focuses on education.

Outcome 2: What are the strengths and the challenges of *Schoology* based on students' perspectives?

Schoology has many strengths and challenges based on students' perspectives in blended learning activity. The survey indicated that through *Schoology* the students can save their time and money in submitting their assignment, access the learning source easily, feel a new learning atmosphere, and give them information about the utilization of digital media for English learning

activity. In addition to its strengths, *Schoolgy* has challenges in conducting blended learning. The use of *Schoolgy* needs strong internet, electricity, and adequate gadget such as *smartphone* or computer.

Outcome 3: What are the *Schoolgy*'s impacts for students in learning English?

Schoolgy shows the impacts for students in learning English in blended learning setting. From the survey, the students agreed that this activity improved them in learning language. The details are 91.3% improved their reading skills, 95.1% for writing skills, 76.3% for speaking skill, and 67.6% for listening skill. Listening skill has the lowest percentage because the students prefer to conduct listening practice in the onsite classroom rather than in online classroom. Again, it is because of the problem in internet connection. For reading and writing skills, the students can do it both in onsite and online classroom. Whereas speaking skill, the students love to upload their speaking assignment in the form of video through *Schoolgy*. In addition, around 90% students agreed that both online and classroom activities helped them in learning English language.

Besides that, the researchers also found the students' attitude after joining blended learning activity where 67.5% of students found a good balance between online and classroom learning activities. Even though, 66.3 % of students more active in the face-to-face classroom and 50.2% of students are more active in the online classroom. They enjoyed the learning activities as a result they became more discipline and active after participating blended learning. The lecturer also gives them to ask anything related to the course topics both in online and offline.

Discussion

As mentioned before, the use of *Schoolgy* is to facilitate an online communication and discussion, submit the assignment, and share the learning sources. From the findings there were some strengths and challenges of this blended learning. However, online classroom can support onsite classroom in solving the problems such as limitation of time and place. Moreover, online learning gave the opportunity for passive students to deliver their opinion. Sometimes, the passive students shy and afraid to speak up in English class because of the lack of vocabulary and language structure. Therefore, by using online learning they can improve their speaking skill because they have more time to think about their responses in written form.

The standard of competence of this course is the students are able to speak English fluently. Therefore, the lecturer put reading and writing skills in online classroom whereas speaking and listening skills in onsite classroom. The students should repeat the topic of online discussion in onsite classroom where it can be presentation in group or individually. The purpose of this activity was to improve the students' speaking and listening skills. In order to be more interesting in the classroom, the lecturer asked the students to record their presentation performance and shared it through *Schoolgy*. This activity also improved students' critical thinking and communication skills by giving comment, feedback, and criticize to other students' works.

Conclusion

Schoolgy is a learning media which is designed for education purposes that can be used by lecturers in their teaching and learning process. Most of the students agreed that blended learning by using *Schoolgy* can support their productive and receptive language skills. Unfortunately, not all students become the active participants in *Schoolgy* learning activities. It

was because not all students have *smartphone* or personal computer as tools for online learning. Moreover, strong internet connection is also needed. Therefore, for lecturers who want to employ Learning Management System (LMS) or Social Networking Site (SNS) in their teaching and learning process should pay attention to students' background and its benefit to improve the students' English language skills. Moreover, the lecturer should consider about time management and ensure that in teaching and learning process the students not only just struggle in using the application but also learn the language.

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