STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS IN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT: Due to the rapid advancement of technology, teachers are expected to integrate technology into the classroom to engage students who are considered as digital-natives. Thus, Edmodo and Quipper as online learning platforms are widely used by English teachers in teaching and learning. The online learning platforms are also used as a supplementary tool to promote independent learning. This study focuses on students' perceptions on the use of online learning platform in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom. The research involved 40 participants consist of junior and senior high school students in Bandung, West Java. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews and were analyzed using mixed methods approach. The results of the study indicated that majority of participants considered the use of Edmodo or Quipper in English teaching and learning is effective and efficient in terms of time. Although slow-speed internet is considered to be one of difficulties in using Edmodo and Quipper, most of the participants agreed that the online learning platforms can help them in practicing language skills, acquiring new vocabularies, and improving their understanding on the contents of the lesson.

Keywords: Edmodo; Quipper; perceptions

INTRODUCTION

The era of the 21st century has been marked by rapid changes in several areas such as global economy, technology, culture, society, as well as education. The terms "21st century education," "21st century learning," and "21st century skills" are widely known these days. Teachers and schools face big challenges in teaching their students to live and survive in the current era. Teachers have to help students to master 21st century skills so they can deal with the challenges of 21st century.

Some frameworks have been proposed by education experts related to 21st century education and learning. Generally, the frameworks focus on certain core competencies including collaboration, critical thinking, technology and digital literacy, and problem-solving. The framework of P21 (Partnership for 21st century Skills) is one of the frameworks that is widely used by educators who emphasize the importance of 21st century skills in learning. According to the framework of P21, there are four aspects of skills required for students' outcomes and one of them is mastering

information, media, and technology skills. Since students are considered as digital natives and people nowadays live in a technology and media-driven environment, they are expected to be familiar with skills related to information, media, and technology such as accessing and evaluating information, using and managing information, analyzing media, creating media products, and applying technology effectively (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2009). The concept of 21st century education suggests teachers to develop their instruction to ensure their students meet the requirement of 21st century skills. The relevant knowledge are expected to establish students' skills for competitive career and good life, skills for lifelong learning and creative innovation, and skills for literacy, information, media, and technology. (Suherdi, 2012)

Therefore, teachers as a part of educational support system should be able to focus on emphasizing deep understanding and engage students with real world data and tool. In terms of learning strategies, teachers should be able to integrate the use of supportive technology, problem-based approaches, and higher order thinking skills. They should create classroom atmosphere that will support teaching and learning of 21st century. Teachers should integrate technologies with content and pedagogy. 21st century learning involves the engagement of students in collaborative work and real-world problem solving through effective exploitation of information and communication (ICT). According to Hwee, Koh, and Chai (2016), 21st century learning is characterized by students ability in developing social skills for collaboration, conflict resolution, and multicultural communication, cognitive skills to engage in critical thinking for innovation and complex problem solving, metacognitive skills to engage in self-reflection and self-learning, productivity skills to organize work effectively and efficiently, and technological skills to exploit ICT tools appropriately. Thus, teachers should be able to develop the ability to creatively use technology to meet students' learning needs. Because language learning should not only occur in the classroom, technological devices can be used by teachers and students to facilitate language learning. Teachers should encourage students to use their smartphones for doing something meaningful. In English classroom, teachers can ask students to post some photos in their Instagram with English caption. Teachers can also encourage students to convey their opinion towards something and share ideas in Twitter, and discuss through Edmodo or Quipper. Archambault, Wetzel, Foulger, and Williams (2016) stated that the use of social networking tools accommodates feedback between instructors and students and it makes them communicate more efficiently and effectively. Since it is easier to access social networking tools, students can receive immediate response and feedback.

The use of online learning platform such as Edmodo and Quipper has been implemented by some teachers as an attempt in integrating technology into teaching and learning process in the classroom. The online platforms promote both inquiry based learning and independent learning since the online platforms facilitate interactions between teacher and students although they are not in the same room. Edmodo and Quipper as free of charge and user-friendly social learning platforms provide learners with various features that allow learners to interact and collaborate with teacher and peers as well as to access course provided by teacher. The teacher can distribute the assignment, set the submission deadline, and monitor students' progress. Moreover, the online platforms also allow parents to monitor their children's progress.

Many studies have been conducted by researchers related to the implementation of these online learning platforms. The study conducted by Kongchan (2012) in Thailand revealed that the teachers participated in the study perceived Edmodo as a wonderful and user-friendly social learning network that allow them as non-digital-native teachers to explore and utilize the site so they can run their online classes well. Students participated in the study also agreed that using Edmodo was an enjoyable activities. Another study involved 94 undergraduates in Thailand EFL classroom showed that students perceived Edmodo as a beneficial supplementary learning tool because it can increase students' motivation and participation in online learning activities (Manowong, 2016). Similarly, the result of a study conducted in Al Ain University in United Arab Emirates showed that students liked

Edmodo because it is easy to use. They thought Edmodo was quite similar to a social media they occasionally use since it allows students to interact outside the classroom by using their smartphone and tablets. The study also suggested that students will accept technology in the classroom depends on these four important aspects: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (Mustafa, 2015). The study conducted at Taibah University in Saudi Arabia also revealed that students thought that using Edmodo can facilitate them in learning as well as increasing the effectiveness of communication as it save time (Al-said, 2015). Positive attitudes toward Edmodo were also shown in the result of the study of Balasubramanian, Jaykumar, and Fukey (2014) in Selangor, Malaysia and the study of Al-kathiri (2015) in Saudi Arabia.

In Indonesian EFL context, studies related to the use of online learning platforms have been conducted by some researchers. Purnawarman, Sundayana, & Susilawati (2016) conducted a study to find out students' perception towards the use of Edmodo in teaching writing and how Edmodo can facilitate students' engagement. The result of the study showed that Edmodo can be integrated into GBA writing cycles. There are also some issues appeared in the study regarding the bandwidth, confusion in using Edmodo, incompatibility of smartphone applications, and students' lack responsibilities for learning. Moreover, a study conducted by Saptani (2017) involving three English teachers in Semarang, Central Java revealed that Quipper School provides abundant alternative materials that can be used in various learning activities. It also allowed an interaction between students and teacher and increased students' motivation in learning. Thus, the teachers participated in the study perceived Quipper School as a good media in teaching English.

The theories and the result of the studies mentioned above indicate that teachers can utilize online learning platforms such as Edmodo and Quipper to bring technology into the classroom. Nonetheless, in Indonesian EFL context, little research has been done to figure out students' perception towards the use of online learning platforms in English classroom in junior and senior high school. Therefore, the study attempts to investigate students' perceptions towards the use of online learning

platforms in English classroom and benefits of using the online learning platforms such as Edmodo and Quipper.

Thus, the study seeks to achieve aforementioned purposes and the issues to be discussed in this paper will be summarized in the following research questions:
1. How do students perceive the use of Edmodo and Quipper in the EFL classroom?
2. What are the benefits of using Edmodo and Quipper in the EFL classroom?

METHOD
Research Design
The study employs a mixed method approach to put quantitative and qualitative data together. The paradigm of the research involves the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to provide better understanding in answering research questions investigated in the study (Malik & Hamied, 2016). It is in line with Creswell (2009) who states that mixed methods utlizes the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research. The study adopted the concurrent triangulation design which allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and to compare the data to figure out if there is convergence, differences, or some combination (Creswell, 2009).

Data Collection
The study was conducted in November 11 – November 19, 2016. It involved 40 students consists of 20 junior high school students and 20 senior high school students. The participants come from different schools in Bandung, West Java.

Questionnaire and interview were used to collect the data in the research. The questionnaire was adapted and simplified from similar previous studies conducted by Kongchan (2012) and Manowong (2016). The questionnaire consists of 12 closed-ended questions using a four-Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered to figure out students' perception towards the use of online learning platforms such as Edmodo and Quipper in the classroom. Meanwhile, interview was conducted to 15 students. The interview which consists of six questions aimed to gain in-depth explanation and description on the use of online learning

platforms in the classroom. Furthermore, the interview held to investigate students' opinion about the benefits of using Edmodo or Quipper.

Data Analysis
The data from students' closed-ended questionnaire was statistically computed to find out the percentage of each statement and then was interpreted descriptively. The interview data were all transcribed and analyzed for repeating key features which were related to the use of online learning platforms in the classroom. The reappearing of particular opinion can be assumed as the participants' concern towards the issue. The data from the questionnaire and interview were used to provide description of students' perception on the use of online learning platforms such as Edmodo and Quipper and the benefits felt by students after using the learning platforms in English teaching and learning process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
This section presents and discusses the findings related to the research questions on students' perception on the use of online learning platforms in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. The discussion is shown through the interpretation of the results shown in the tables elaborated with the findings from the interview.

The results of the study were obtained from 40 participants consist of 20 junior high school and 20 senior high school students. The students have used either Edmodo or Quipper in English classroom for at least one year. The students stated that the online learning platforms are mostly used for reading and listening. Besides, teachers usually utilize the learning platforms to assign some tasks and tests.

In order to answer research questions, the findings from students' questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions on the Use of Edmodo and Quipper1

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1	I think the reference materials (videos, power point files, articles) and assignments posted by my teacher in Edmodo or Quipper help me to improve my learning and to understand the contents/ topics of the lesson better.	17.5%	67.5%	15.0%	-
2	I think Edmodo or Quipper is convenient to use especially in submitting assignments.	27.5%	52.5%	20.0%	-
3	I think online activities and discussions in Edmodo or Quipper can motivate me to learn more about the lesson.	12.5%	45.0%	37.5%	5%

Table 1 shows that most respondents (SA = 17.5%, Agree = 67.5%) in the study agreed that materials provided by their teachers in Edmodo or Quipper help them in improving their understanding of the lessons. The students (SA = 27.5%, Agree = 52.5%) also thought that Edmodo or Quipper is easy to use especially in submitting their assignments. Although there are students who are neutral and did not agree with question 3 which stated whether or not Edmodo or Quipper can motivate them to learn about the lesson, the high percentage still can be seen by the students who chose agree (45%) and strongly agree (12.5%). It can be concluded that the high gap between agree and neutral or

disagree can indicate that students give positive response to Edmodo or Quipper regarding the materials relevancy, convenience, and stimulus in motivating them to learn more about related lesson. Table 2 shows students' response on time effectiveness and encouragement in practicing language skills and acquiring new vocabularies. The table showed that 65% respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement that the use of Edmodo and Quipper saves effort and time in learning. Majority of the respondents strongly agree (15%) and agree (67.5%) that the online learning platforms can help them in practicing their English skills. Moreover, students mostly agreed (strongly agree = 22.5%,

agree = 65%) that Edmodo and Quipper can help them in acquiring new English vocabulary. The table also show there were high gaps between agree and neutral or disagree in question 5 and question 6. Those gaps indicated

that students' positive attitude towards the use of Edmodo or Quipper in the classroom since it can help them to practice their language skills as well as to acquire new English vocabularies.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions on the Use of Edmodo and Quipper 2

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
4	I think the use of Edmodo or Quipper saves effort and time.	27.5%	37.5%	30.0%	5.0%
5	I think the use of Edmodo or Quipper helps me practicing my language skills	15.0%	67.5%	17.5%	-
6	I think Edmodo or Quipper helps me acquiring new English vocabularies.	22.5%	65.0%	12.5%	-

Table 3 shows that many students (neutral = 40%) cannot decide whether or not Edmodo or Quipper engage them in interesting reading experience. However, half of the respondents (strongly agree = 17.5%, agree = 37.5%) agreed that read online materials through the learning platforms can be a quite interesting experience for them. Because of the students believed that the use of Edmodo or Quipper saves time and efforts, the data shows that students thought

Edmodo or Quipper can increase the effectiveness of learning. Most of the respondents (75%) also agreed that Edmodo or Quipper can facilitate interaction and communication between teacher and students. The table also shows that although many students chose neutral in question 7, the percentage of agree in higher in the two following questions.

Table 3. Students' Perceptions on the Use of Edmodo and Quipper 3

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
7	I think the use of Edmodo or Quipper makes my reading experience more interesting	17.5%	37.5%	40%	5%
8	I think the use of Edmodo or Quipper increases the effectiveness of learning	27.5%	60%	10%	2.5%
9	I think Edmodo or Quipper facilitates interaction and communication between teacher and students.	30%	45%	15%	10%

Table 4 shows that half of the respondents cannot decide whether or not they prefer reading the materials in paper instead or reading the materials online. Although the data from the previous question showed that many students felt that Edmodo or Quipper made their reading experience more interesting, the result of question 10 showed that many students (strongly agree = 10%, agree = 35%) still prefer reading the materials or text in paper form. Question 11 indicated that many students thought Edmodo and Quipper as an easy to use learning tool. It is shown by the high percentage of students

choosing disagree (40%). The last question showed that one of the problems in using online learning platforms is slow-speed internet on students' mobile. The table also showed that there are many students choose to be neutral in these three questions. However, the percentage of students who chose disagree in question 11 and 12 were quite high.

In depth explanation towards the use of online learning platforms were obtained through the interview. The interview involving 15 students showed that most of the students agreed that using Edmodo or Quipper can save time.

Besides, they also stated that since online learning only use laptop or cellular phone, it can save paper. The students highlighted that by doing the assignment or test through Edmodo or Quipper, they can know the result as soon as they finished the tasks. Thus, they believe that the feature belongs to one of advantage of using Edmodo or Quipper in the classroom. However, because students have to remain online when they do the tasks given, they thought that internet connection can be quite a main problem in using Edmodo or Quipper. The students mentioned that slow-speed internet is a problem usually encountered in doing the tasks. Besides, few respondents also mentioned that instead of using their mobile data, they thought that it is better for them to find out places with high-speed internet connection to do their Edmodo or Quipper tasks.

Table 4. Students' Perceptions on the Use of Edmodo and Quipper 4

No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
10	I prefer reading my courses in paper form instead of reading them through Edmodo or Quipper.	10.0%	35.0%	50.0%	5.0%
11	I think it is difficult to use Edmodo or Quipper as mobile learning application.	7.5%	25.0%	27.5%	40.0%
12	I think it is difficult to use Edmodo or Quipper because of the slow-speed internet on my mobile	12.5%	17.5%	47.5%	22.5%

Furthermore, based on the interview, due to the practicality, some students think that online learning should be promoted in the classroom. They think that online learning is quite simple and practical. They mentioned that online learning can be easier because they do not need to hand-write their assignment. Using Edmodo or Quipper also bring new learning atmosphere and they do not get bored by doing the tasks given through the platforms. On the other hand, some other students emphasize that both online and conventional learning are important. They think that in some cases, direct explanation by teacher can be beneficial in helping them to understand the lesson. The teachers can repeat some parts which could not be understood by the students and the students can ask their teacher to re-explain the lesson. The students also said that conventional learning allow them to interact directly with their teachers. They can ask things they do not understand and their teacher will directly answer those questions. The students stated that it is important for them to get response or feedback from teachers. However, students believe that teachers should implement both conventional and online learning during teaching and learning process and because the use of online learning platforms gave many benefits, students argued that it is better for teacher to use Edmodo and Quipper as supplementary learning tool.

Students' Perceptions on the Use of Online Learning Platforms

The data showed that students gave various responses toward the use of online learning platforms such as Edmodo or Quipper in the classroom. However, most of the respondents of the study perceived the use of Edmodo or Quipper in positive way.

The students participated in the study agree that by using Edmodo or Quipper, they can learn particular lesson outside the classroom. The students mentioned that Edmodo or Quipper allow them to do the assignments given by their teacher at home or anywhere, anytime. The online learning platforms allow the students to do the assignment during their spare time, anywhere, as long as they have sufficient internet connection. They also mentioned that the online materials provided by their teacher through Edmodo or Quipper are easily accessible. The online learning platforms allow teachers to create and share materials to support students' learning as well as to provide learning tasks to help them in practicing the language. The accessible platforms encourage students to learn in any location and at any time via computer, tablets, or

smartphones (Wallace, 2014; Hammonds et al., 2013 in Manowong, 2016).

Students see the use of online learning platform in the classroom is environment-friendly. Although some of the students still prefer reading the text in the paper, they think that online learning should be promoted since it is paperless and is very good for environment.

Related to the problems on using the online learning platforms in English classroom, the participants involved in the study mentioned that the internet connection is the main problem appeared during the use of Edmodo or Quipper. The finding is supported by the result of the study conducted by Enriquez (2014) and (Ekmekçi, 2016) which state that the access to the internet is the main disadvantage of using Edmodo because while the platforms requires constant internet connection, not all students have a good access to internet connection. In addition, the small-sized screen, the slow-speed internet, and bandwith appear as problems encountered by students who use Edmodo in their class (Al-kathiri, 2015; Purnawarman, Sundayana, & Susilawati, 2016)

The Benefits of Using Online Learning Platforms in EFL Classroom
The data presented showed that materials provided by teachers in Edmodo or Quipper can help students to improve their understanding towards the lessons. The students also mentioned that the exercises in the online learning platforms help them to practice language skills and to acquire new English vocabularies. The students agreed that the listening task given by the teachers provide them with materials that can be used for practicing outside the classroom. Besides, since the online learning platforms expose them to various abundant reading materials, the students can obtain new vocabularies by reading the materials. The findings is supported by Chapelle (2003) who states that enhancing students' linguistic input is one of the benefits that should be brought when teacher utilize computer technology in the classroom.

The use of Edmodo or Quipper in the classroom also stimulates students' interest and engages them in new learning experience. They said that instead of reading the text in the paper, they read the text through the screen and it makes reading becomes more interesting. It is in line with the result of the study conducted by Mustafa (2015) who stated that students do not feel bored when they learn through Edmodo. Using social media tools can develop students' learning experience since they increased the level of students' engagement in improving students' educational outcomes (Cruz & Cruz, 2013 in Manowong, 2016). The platform also breaks their learning routine and it motivate them to interact and share information between peers. In addition, by using Quipper teachers and students can engage in interpersonal communication. The features of 'message' and 'announcement' facilitate teachers to interact with their students. Edmodo, with its chat features, can encourage students' confidence and motivation and can facilitate shy students to interact more with teachers and their peers (Al-kathiri, 2015).

Moreover, the interaction between students is facilitated through 'group work' feature (Mulyono, 2016). In line with this, a study involving private university students in Selangor, Malaysia reveals that one of the advantages of using Edmodo is promoting group learning through its features such as discussion, online quiz, and sharing folder option (Balasubramanian, Jaykumar, & Fukey, 2014). The role of online learning platforms in facilitating interaction also mentioned in the study conducted by Purnawarman, Sundayana, & Susilawati (2016). It is stated that when the students join groups and comment on posts, they realize that Edmodo has facilitated them to communicate with their surroundings.

As previously mentioned, teachers utilize Edmodo or Quipper to give students assignment or test. It means that students use Edmodo or Quipper as one of evaluation tools. The online learning platforms can be an alternative effective assessment tool in language classroom. Furthermore, many students feel that online exam can reduce their anxiety during the test (Ekmekçi, 2016). Moreover, students found that submitting their assignment or test in Edmodo or Quipper is quite easy. Besides, it does not require much time and effort.

In addition, the findings showed that students, who are considered as digital-natives, are motivated when teachers integrate technology into the classroom. Computer-based

assignments are effective to discover students' understanding on certain concepts of the subject. Working with computer will make students learn more quickly, show greater retention, and are better motivated to learn (Koert, 2000 in Enriquez, 2014). The use of technology can gain students' interest because it satisfies their technology addiction. The digital-native students can be interested in learning because they like the fact that they utilize technology in the classroom (Mustafa, 2015).

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study indicate that students show positive response towards the use of online learning platforms such as Edmodo or Quipper. The students participated in the study perceive online learning platforms as a user-friendly learning tool which encourage them to interact with their teachers and peers outside the classroom. The online learning platforms facilitate them with the features allowing them to work independently yet share their thoughts through group discussion. Besides, students think that using online learning platforms in learning process is effective since it saves time and effort. They also think that online learning is environment-friendly because it can save paper used for the assignments.

Some benefits of using online learning platforms mentioned by the students. They think that the materials provided in Edmodo or Quipper can improve their understanding towards the lesson taught by the teachers. They also argue that the use of Edmodo or Quipper can help them in practicing their language skills, especially reading and listening skills. Because teachers mainly utilize Edmodo or Quipper to assign reading practice, students state that the online platforms can help them in gaining new vocabularies. In addition, students feel that online learning platforms can motivate them to learn more. By integrating technology, they do not feel bored and experience new learning atmosphere.

Therefore, we can conclude that since students perceive the use of online learning platform in EFL classroom positively, online learning platforms such as Edmodo or Quipper could be explored as a supplementary learning tool.

Regarding the findings of the study, some recommendations are suggested. For teachers, since the use of online learning platform is promising to be implemented in the classroom, teachers have to be more creative in choosing materials. The challenges encountered by teachers are selecting materials which not only meet students' need and development but also help students to achieve learning objectives. Teachers are also encouraged to be more interactive during the online learning process. It will be better if they can give immediate response and feedback on students' work regularly. Although students' difficulties in operating online learning platform do not appear as one of the problems in the study, it is recommended for teachers to show the students step by step in using the online platforms to ensure that their students will be able to operate the online platforms outside the classroom. Related to the internet connection as a main problem in using Edmodo or Quipper, school should provide internet facilities to support the integration of technology in the classroom. Finally, further studies involving more participants or different areas are suggested to be conducted to explore more not only about students' and teachers' perception but also about the effectiveness of using online learning platforms in the different context of EFL Indonesian Classroom.

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