

Incorporating English Skills in Blended Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Narrative Inquiry

Sri Wahyuningsih^{1*} & Muhamad Afandi²

¹ Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Kudus, Indonesia

² Universitas Islam Sultan Agung, Semarang, Indonesia

*wahyuningsih@iainkudus.ac.id

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 18 April 2022

Revised : 4 August 2022

Accepted : 27 September 2022

KEYWORDS

COVID-19

English Skills

Narrative Inquiry

Blended Learning

Indonesian Higher Education

ABSTRACT

The present study mainly attempts to explore the experiences of the two English language lecturers in incorporating English skills in blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on teaching professionalism considering that few studies discuss the ways of incorporating English skills in blended learning in more detail. To investigate the lecturers' experiences, a narrative inquiry was employed in this study. Data were collected through narrative interviews with two English language lecturers at one of the Indonesian higher educations. The findings reveal that blended learning can be a better solution for learning activities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding English skills incorporation in blended learning, it was found that the English lecturers used a number of ways of teaching English. First, creating a fun class in blended learning by using some applications like YouTube, video, Instagram, Facebook, and others in incorporating English skills. Second, asking students to have presentations and explain the materials. Third, reviewing books or observing videos. Fourth, providing games in the EFL classroom. Fifth, making use of digital technology and application in teaching English in blended learning such as Kahoot, Quizzes, Google Workspace, Jam board, Pear deck, and so on. Finally, the English lecturers are interested in making use of blended learning in incorporating English skills, particularly during this pandemic. Further, they intend to provide suitable materials for blended learning in EFL classrooms. The findings of this study have offered the need of developing professionalism among the English lecturers in implementing blended learning that can be realized by taking part in training on the application of blended learning and providing appropriate English materials in incorporating English skills for creating meaningful and successful learnings.

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has highlighted the COVID-19 virus as a pandemic globally in the world. Currently, the existence of corona virus had impacts on various fields particularly in education. To minimize its spread, a number of public sectors especially universities have limited their educational programs on site (Davis & Phillips, 2021). In responding to it, schools and universities are urged to conduct face-to-face activities of teaching and learning because of social distancing policies.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic had frustrated people around the world including the Indonesian people. In responding to this case, the Indonesian government has declared several prevention efforts, as initial steps to break the chain of the COVID-19 spread including asking people to avoid crowds, keeping cleanliness and immunity, maintaining health protocols, making use of masks and other prevention efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic has had the main effects on the educational sector. The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of

Indonesia has produced a number of guidelines to organize teaching and learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, many Indonesian educational institutions are required to carry out online learning relying on technology use. In fact, online learning is merely dependent on technological instruments and internet connections (Adedoyin, O. B; Soykan, 2020).

Recently, the new normal era has just started in Indonesia. The Ministry of Education and Culture permits green zone institutions to conduct education teaching and learning activities under conditions, such as always keeping health protocols. In such situations, blended learning is considerably needed for the sake of meeting both teachers' and students' needs in the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the concept of blended learning has been in line with this era, as it is in accordance with technology development. The term blended learning is described as the integration of face-to-face learning experiences in the classroom with online learning experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Although in most developing countries, the implementation of mixed learning has several challenges, it

is merely considered as one of the most effective learning approaches (Kintu et al., 2017). This is in line with Dziuban et al., (2018) emphasizing that blended learning has offered successful and effective learning conditions. As a result, the mixture of technological gadgets and the supply of interplay among teachers and college students need more powerful studying process.

Regarding the implementation of blended learning, a number of Indonesian higher educations have conducted it since college students are considerably able to adapt it, make use of technology, and attend lecture on campus. In the EFL classroom, for instance, many English lecturers had conducted blended learning in teaching English. Further, they have completely carried out both offline and online learning in the EFL classroom. Nevertheless, they are required to keep incorporating English skills in this blended learning.

Numerous studies in accordance with blended learning have had been previously conducted by some scholars. Many studies highlight the implementation of blended learning viewed from certain perspectives like teachers and students, curriculum field, teaching experiences and so on. In addition, a lot of studies emphasize the study of blended learning viewed from one perspective. The study conducted by Andujar & Nadif (2020) for instance, highlighted the experience of using blended learning viewed from students' perspectives. Furthermore, another study conducted by Mendieta and Barkhuizen (2020) emphasized that the implementation of blended language learning in the Columbian context is viewed from one's perspective particularly by two English language teachers regarding blended learning curriculum. In more detail, Dahmash (2020) reports his study related to the benefits of using blended learning for EFL learners in writing class during the COVID-19 pandemic viewed from students' perspectives particularly in enhancing the students' writing skills and fostering them to get online. The above elaborations showed that some previous studies had emphasized the study of blended learning viewed from the student's or teacher's perspectives. In addition, the study of certain fields especially the ways of incorporating English skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing has not yet been explored by previous scholars particularly using a narrative inquiry approach. Due to the few studies of incorporating English skills in blended learning using a narrative inquiry approach, the purpose of the present study is to explore more the ways of incorporating English skills in blended learning classes at one of the Indonesian higher educations viewed from the perspectives of lecturers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hopefully, the present study presents pedagogical contributions to the educational field especially in English language teaching using blended learning. As we have already known that incorporating English in an offline

meeting has already been practiced by some English language teachers through a set of teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, the practice of incorporating English in blended learning classes has not been explored yet. Thus, the ways of incorporating English in blended learning classes have been beneficial for English language teachers, especially they will have fruitful insight on how to instill English skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing in blended learning class. Moreover, it benefits the students in enriching their knowledge of technology utilization, teaching media, and methods in English language teaching, particularly in blended learning classes.

More importantly, English language teachers are now demanded to make use of technology in the digital era including in English language teaching. Indeed, they can improve their quality of teaching with the help of technology. In this context, for instance, they can implement blended learning classes due to their effectiveness. Moreover, they can explore their creativity by providing meaningful English classes and learn numerous sources of English materials from the internet and other sources.

Interestingly, this study employed a narrative inquiry approach by which the writers could engage the participants of the study more deeply in uncovering their experiences in incorporating English skills amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It is in accordance with Dayal et al., (2021) asserting that through the narrative inquiry, we could provide an opportunity to have individual experiences among teachers and students as professional and intellectual knowledge. In fact, the study of narrative inquiry was undertaken by some scholars viewed from one perspective especially teachers' perspectives. For example, a study conducted by some scholars reported a number of ways in fostering curriculum making in higher education and explored teachers' experiences and attitudes towards blended learning using narrative inquiry (Farani, 2021; Kükner & Orr, 2013; Xiaoxiao, 2020). Indeed, the study of narrative inquiry in blended learning classes particularly the ways of incorporating English skills viewed by teachers has not been investigated. In response to the fewer studies highlighting the study of narrative inquiry in blended learning classes particularly in incorporating English skills, the purpose of the present study is to explore more the teaching experiences of lecturers at one of the Indonesian higher educations in incorporating English skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing in blended learning classes using a narrative inquiry approach amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Blended Learning

Blended learning can be defined as a learning method using two approaches both e-learning and face-to-face learning. Smartphones and computers generally usually

used to enhance the e-learning process. In this context, blended learning has urged us to comprehend the technology characteristics and information communication technologies (Dziuban et al., 2018). It has been utilized with hybrid instruction and technology (Howard, 2020). In this pandemic era, blended learning is considered as one solution to encourage students in teaching and learning activities (George-walker & Keeffe, 2010).

Further, blended learning is rampantly used in higher education since students are able to access information and technologies independently. These descriptions indicate that blended learning has offered both students and teachers to communicate in face-to-face instruction and daring learning. Besides, it offers a chance for collaboration and learning communities (Yang, 2012). On the contrary, blended learning has some challenges. These include lack of sufficient materials, lack of classroom involvement, lack of supporting infrastructure, lack of skill in using technology, and lack of technological skills (Namysova et al., 2019; Yang & Kuo, 2021).

In accordance with the implementation of blended learning, it is actually has been implemented by the educators' long time before the pandemic. In addition, blended learning has been rampantly used by the educators amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In Indonesia, a number of schools particularly high schools have made a policy for teachers to utilize blended learning in teaching and learning process considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, students in high schools are considered as those who were able to make use of technology and online learning platform by themselves. Therefore, in online meeting, they could learn from various platforms such as google classroom, google meet, Zoom, WhatsApp, YouTube, Edmodo, and so on. Meanwhile, teachers could provide feedbacks and evaluation in accordance with the materials they delivered in face-to-face learning to meet the students' need. This has been highlighted by (Namysova et al., 2019) that teachers should focus on both technical and teaching material points in implementing blended learning especially in meeting the need and expectations of students before and after the class.

2.2 Teaching English Using Blended Learning

Blended learning can be used by educators to teach many subjects including English. in the context of teaching English, In the online learning process, teachers need some application and learning media to support the online class. They can make use of some applications in delivering the lesson. These include WhatsApp group, Google Classroom, YouTube, and Zoom (Wahyuningsih, 2021). These applications have some own benefits to help distance learning activities (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). The WhatsApp group was used to convey the material through voice notes and video calls.

Furthermore, giving assignments to students must be conveyed by oral speaking through voice notes as well. The Google Classroom application is used to join classes, create daily assignments, and do other written assignments. Then, the YouTube application is used to facilitate understanding of the material because it contains videos with explanations. The last application is Zoom Meeting; it is used for virtual communication via video conference. Meanwhile, in offline learning, teachers can provide feedback and evaluation regarding English materials delivered previously.

In EFL classes, blended learning has been utilized by some scholars. For instance, the study conducted by Yang & Kuo(2021) reported that using blended learning in EFL class could prompt the EFL students in developing literacy since they were got involved in cross-cultural communication by building online interactions with English teachers from different backgrounds. Another study conducted by Purnawarman et al.(2016) investigating the use of Edmodo in blended learning especially in teaching writing. The result revealed that Edmodo could facilitate the participation among students in writing. In terms of teaching reading skills, the study conducted by Yang (2012) reported that blended learning could be used to teach reading for college students with English difficulties since blended learning can help them control their reading. The above elaborations reveal that blended learning could be used as a media to teach English depending on how teachers and students manage the teaching and learning process.

2.3 Using A Narrative Inquiry in Uncovering Teachers' and Students' Experiences

Narrative inquiry is one of the qualitative research approaches investigating individual human's experiences. As we have already known that people have a story to tell. Further, story humanizes experience for other people and each person has an innate need to describe (Ford, 2020). Referring to it, the narrative inquiry is considerably suitable to uncover or tell the experiences of people in certain fields. Likewise, in education field, the approach of narrative inquiry could be used as a way to explore more the data about experiences of teachers and students in teaching and learning activities.

Recent studies in line with a narrative inquiry have been undertaken by some scholars. The study of narrative inquiry about the experiences in working with trauma of counsellor trainees conducted by Dayal et al(2021) was to comprehend how their experiences within and outside and the process of counselling programs and uncovering their opinions of trauma works. Another study conducted by Mendieta & Barkhuizen (2020) investigating the experiences of teachers in implementing a blended learning curriculum. The findings reveal that blended learning is a complex thing depending on the teachers' beliefs and views. Further, it highlights that the need of being aware of ways to help teachers apply blended learning properly.

In addition, another study regarding a narrative study examines the experience of English language learning was built through some alternatives to certain cultural aspects and narrative ways (Coffey & Street, 2008). Importantly, their study offers contribution to the research area utilizing language learning experiences. On the contrary, the present study more emphasizes on the ways of incorporating all English skills in blended learning class viewed from teachers' stories and experiences using a narrative inquiry approach amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. It was employed by considering the existence of data in the form of stratified experiences. In this matter, it explores individual and garner data from human's story and experience (Creswell, 2012).

In conclusion, blended learning has already been adapted by some scholars in various disciplines including English. Unfortunately, the ways of incorporating some English skills in blended learning have not been explored yet. Therefore, the present study would like to investigate lecturers' experiences in their blended learning classes in English language teaching. In more detail, the ways of incorporating several English skills including listening, speaking, reading, and writing are explored through a set of activities with the help of technology. To obtain further insight successfully, a narrative inquiry is utilized to uncover the lecturers' experiences and stories in teaching English using blended learning.

Method

This study mainly explores the experiences of English language lecturers in incorporating English skills during the COVID-19 pandemic in blended learning. The narrative inquiry method is utilized because of the nature of the data in the form of stratified experiences. As a research design, narrative research focuses on studying one person and collecting data from individual experiences and stories (Creswell, 2012). Narrative inquiry also offers researchers to give space to make the personal experiences of lecturers as professional knowledge and intellectual knowledge for others (Dayal et al., 2021). This kind of design has also provided the insight of how personal and social aspects are explored in the lives of lecturers, how these experiences are fostered by the larger social and institutional narratives in which they live (Clandinin, 2006). Moreover, the writers engage with the life experiences of lecturers and interpret these experiences. The participating lecturers have shared their experiences in incorporating English skills during the COVID-19 pandemic in blended learning. To gain more insight regarding the lecturers' stories and experiences of using blended learning in English language teaching, we employed a qualitative approach using narrative interviews.

After building intensive personal communication, the writers decided to take two lecturers teaching English in one of Indonesian higher educations during the COVID-19 outbreak in blended learning as participants of this study. These lecturers consisted of a male English lecturer

(categorized as L1) and a female English lecturer (L2). The writers conducted narrative interviews to get views and practices on the ways of incorporating English skills in blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding the teaching experiences, lecturer 1 has been teaching English in higher education for about six years. Meanwhile, lecturer 2 has been teaching English for ten years. They were chosen for the rationales of accessibility, openness, and availability. Further, they were considered as the participants who were able to provide data in detail regarding their experiences in incorporating English skills in blended learning class amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In this matter, their names were in pseudonyms in for maintaining confidentiality.

The data of this study were gained through narrative interviews with lecturers about their professional experiences in incorporating English skills in blended learning. The data were gathered since 10th to 12th of December 2021. In addition, the writers had made sure the confidentiality of the participants' identities by convincing that all names were anonymized.

In gaining the data, the writers made an appointment with the participants on campus to carry out interviews regarding the identity of the lecturers and their experiences of teaching English during the pandemic. This is in line with the design and ways of incorporating English skills in blended learning. It does so through record their stories. Consequently, the writers asked for further needed information via WhatsApp to obtain more data.

In analysing the data, the writers transcribed the recorded data of interviews to enhance the process of data reduction and coding. In the process of having a deeper analysis, the writers read the transcription of the interview data repeatedly to obtain the main finding. Additionally, the data analysis procedure made use of some procedures proposed by Widodo (2014) including listening to a recording for several times, transcribing in proper format by having multiple readings of interview transcripts to obtain a comprehensive insight of the participants' stories, interpreting the data by interpreting each participant's words, having communication whether the data fix the participant's intent; and engaging data credibility by provoking some feedback on interpreting data from participants..

3. Results

3.1 English Language Lecturers' Experiences in Incorporating English skills in Blended Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Experiences and stories from English lecturers provided insight into practices of blended learning in English language teaching. Regarding it, the analysis of the study presented themes including the lecturers' experiences in incorporating English skills in blended learning classes and evolving

effects on teaching professionalism among the lecturers. In educational field, the Indonesian government has just begun to take policies allowing the learning process to be conducted through face-to-face in certain educational institutions especially for green zone areas. Nevertheless, in implementing educational interests, several requirements like keeping health protocols are needed to be able to carry out face-to-face learning on campus. Therefore, blended learning could be considered as the possible teaching concept implemented by educational institutions categorized as green zona areas including one of the Indonesian higher educations. Regarding the experiences of incorporating English skills in blended learning, the two lecturers (L1, L2) had the same points that blended learning is not something new for them, it is an old teaching concept by combining conventional (offline) learning and online learning. They highlight that incorporating the English skills in blended learning can be achieved through a number of ways. Firstly, creating a fun class in blended learning by using some applications like YouTube, video, Instagram, Facebook and others in incorporating English skills. Secondly, asking students to have a presentation and explaining materials. Thirdly, reviewing books or observing Videos. Fourthly, Providing Games in EFL Classroom. Fifthly, Making use of digital technology in teaching English in blended learning. For the sake of clarity. The following explanations in line with the ways in incorporating English skills in blended learning were elaborated below.

- a. Creating a fun class in blended learning by using some applications like YouTube, video, Instagram, Facebook, and others in incorporating English skills.

The students will achieve the expected ability if they are eager to learn and encourage themselves to keep practicing speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. In this sense, the role of lecturers and active participations from the students will provide the great learning process. Further, the lecturers can briefly provide information, instruction, and commands while the students independently work on using their most effort to learn and practice until they feel they have made it through the goal. Additionally, the lecturers may order them to be in group and have some discussion to present what they have discussed about or separate them in pair.

As has been asserted by L1 that he had the strategy of online learning with the way each of the first meeting up to twelve performed with the online class. Meanwhile, the rest was made to review material that has already been described through face-to-face meeting. In the online class, he used YouTube to teach speaking rather than using apps like zoom, google meet, and others. It is intended that the students can replay the video of the learning on YouTube. It was proven by the following excerpt:

In teaching English, I need some strategies particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. one of the strategies is

creating a fun class in blended learning. Besides, I also used some online learning platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and others to enhance students' practices in English skills (Lecturer 1, 2021).

Excerpt 1

Likewise, the same thing was revealed by L2 that she made use of technology in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, she used social media like Facebook and Instagram as media to teach English. Further, she asked their students to create videos of speaking English and upload them in social media. This was done to arouse the students' interest and avoid boredom among them. It was proven by the following excerpt:

Having a fun class in English class is crucial in blended learning especially during the COVID-19 outbreak. In terms of incorporating English skills in blended learning, it can be achieved by providing interesting class to avoid the boredom among the students. I also asked my students to create videos of speaking English or other English contents uploaded in social media. (Lecturer 2, 2021).

Excerpt 2

- b. Asking students to have a presentation and explaining materials.

The Lecturers are encouraged to explain the lesson they have told the students about the theme before. Further, they can let the students have a presentation. To make such a great presentation, it can be achieved by dropping intuitive pictures, music, and video in it. It is considerably simple to make use of them and incorporate into web-based media and YouTube. Meanwhile, the other students will enjoy the time and they can also participate it by giving an argument about it or have a comment on what issue is displayed on the screen. They will have the turn of their part. In addition, elaborating something to students will allow them to understand more about their tasks and how it works. For instance, the lecturers can provide some theme as references including grammar, describing people and place, type of reading methods, how to deliver a speech and so forth. This has been evidenced by the following excerpt:

As a lecturer, I need to explore some activities that could arouse the students' motivation in learning English. For example: in order to incorporate the speaking skill, students were asked to have a presentation through a video. They can modify it using pictures, music to attract others. Then they can upload it in YouTube or other social media (Lecturer 1, 2021).

Excerpt 3

Similarly, L2 advocated that she had strategies in blended learning classes. This was achieved by combining a set of activities of English language teaching in an offline meeting and an online meeting. In incorporating speaking skills, for instance, she internalized critical thinking skills in speaking class. This was done by provoking students to present their opinions about several topics by creating videos in English in online class. Meanwhile, she gave an encouragement to students to give comments and arguments towards the videos made by other students. It was highlighted by the following excerpt:

In fostering students' skills especially in speaking skill and critical thinking, students can be involved in creating activities in English class. Students were asked to present their opinions about certain topics by making a video. Then, in offline class, other students were asked to give comments and arguments towards the presentations of others (Lecturer 2, 2021).

Excerpt 4

c. Reviewing books or observing Videos

The lecturers ask the students to watch the movie or video or read books at home first until they meet in the next term. In addition, the preview can be displayed on screen then asking each student about the observation by provoking some questions like what opinion they got after watching the video, what messages can be concluded from the video, who the main characters are, where the setting of the movie is and so forth. Regarding the assignment of reading a book or an article, the lecturers merely give some questions to the students like who the main character is, how they can get out from the problem, where it is, why they commit such action and so on. The practice on using video in incorporating English skills is explored by L1 and L2 who had some preparations in blended learning. They distributed materials through WhatsApp and asked students to study by themselves. Then, they re-explained the material in face-to-face class. In addition, if students have difficulties, they can have a discussion in face-to-face classes. It has been proved by the following excerpt:

I share material in the form of videos and PPT and even text to students via WhatsApp groups. Then at in a face-to-face meeting, I re-explain the material. Furthermore, students' difficulties or learning objectives that have not been achieved can be discussed and resolved during face-to-face meetings. (Lecturer 1, 2021)

Excerpt 5

In addition, L2 explained that she had better ways of teaching reading in blended learning classes. Moreover, she pursued the students to have reading skills through extensive and intensive reading encouragement. In more detail, in fostering extensive reading in an online class, the students were asked to read magazine, newspaper, comics and other

sources of English from the internet. Meanwhile, in fostering the students' intensive reading skills, L2 gave English reading including English texts associated with various topics. Then, in an offline meeting, L2 provided meaningful feedback associated with the reading sources that the students accessed and read both intensive and extensive readings. Dealing with teaching speaking, L2 provided some videos sent through WhatsApp. Then, students were asked to watch the videos and elaborate the content of videos including the participants, settings and stories. It was proven by the following excerpt:

I teach reading through asking students to read any kind of English book, magazine, newspaper, comics and so on in online class. Then, I can ask some questions and feedback regarding the content of book, setting and others in face-to-face meetings. In teaching speaking, I ask the students to watch videos. Then, they are asked to describe the content of video and others. (Lecturer 2, 2021)

Excerpt 6

d. Providing Games in EFL Classroom

Providing games in EFL class especially in blended learning can build students' interest in studying English. Further, playing Games while learning can help the students learn English better and develop teaching and learning process (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019; Dewi, R.S, Kultsum, U. Armadi, 2017; Farid & Yansyah, 2019; Lin et al., 2018; Townsend, 2009; Utami & Bharati, 2020). The use of game in EFL classroom is strengthened by some scholars. Young & Wang (2014) integrate game strategies with automatic speech recognition technologies to give learners with individual opportunities for English pronunciation learning. In teaching grammar, the utilization of educational games is considerably able to develop English grammar achievement among students in East Jerusalem (Al-Jarrah et al., 2019). Additionally, the use of poster game can enhance students' motivation in learning vocabulary (Wahyuningsih & Novita, 2021). Based on the interviews, the two participants advocate that games can be used in incorporating English skills, for instance, speaking skills. In this sense, the lecturers can make use of role play in which students can explore their speaking skill. Another example of game used by the lecturers in incorporating listening skill is guessing lyric in English. Furthermore, in incorporating reading skill, the lecturers provide games by guessing the story, the character and the plot of the book or article. Meanwhile, in incorporating writing skill, the lecturers ask the students to write their own experience and story by providing a number of themes particularly related to COVID-19 pandemic such as health, education, economic, technology and so on.

Moreover, the blended learning has opportunities for students to exchange in writing based on its diverse learning activities. Additionally, through blended learning, students

can exchange and explain written information and clarify feedback about their learning tasks. In order to make the writing perfectly magnificent, it is needed to search on the web or English book to get an idea. For this reason, the role of lecturers is so crucial in motivating students in enhancing English skills. They can ask their students to focus on the theme and make a sequence how it is going to be like.

As a matter of fact, reading and writing are just like side-to-side skills. Reading is considered as perceptive skill while writing is as productive skill. To write something, students need to read for some time to make sure the understanding in the topic that they will be written. For reading something, the lecturers have ensured that reading English book or text can help students improve their writing skill.

Moreover, in order to enhance the reading skill among university students, the lecturers gave a recommendation of finding literature like biography, novel, short story, folklore story, current news, and so forth. Meanwhile, in order to motivate students in incorporating listening and speaking skills, the students were asked to train pronunciations and conversations, practice speaking through applications like TikTok, YouTube, live streaming, and discussions.

In the session of face-to-face learning, the lecturers had made a discussion of grammar, vocabulary use, and pronunciation. During training, students practiced communicating in English with friends and teachers. This will start a speaking class activity that will improve their speaking skills. In this matter, the lecturers took into account the abilities of the students, explained why these learning materials are important to be achieved, guided students to study the materials on the internet, and prepared them for learning. Thus, the role of lecturers is to monitor and explain when students ask questions and encounter difficulties in teaching and learning.

e. Making use of digital technology in teaching English in blended learning

Based on the interviews, it was found that English lecturers have made use of technology in teaching English particularly in blended learning. As has been reported by L1 emphasizing that she used google meet and WhatsApp to teach English in online class. Meanwhile, L2 preferred creating videos containing English materials uploaded in YouTube. In addition, in offline class, they merely provided feedback and more explanations regarding English materials as an enrichment for the students. The importance of integrating digital technology like video and YouTube in educational settings particularly in EFL classroom is in line with (Wahyuningsih & Dewi, 2019; Yamauchi, 2009) emphasizing that YouTube and video could be used as media to teach English particularly speaking skills. In this sense, the lecturers (L1 and L2) had integrated both virtual and physical landscape to promote more flexible chances in

teaching English. This has been evidenced by the following excerpt:

I used digital technology in blended learning. I used to google meet and WhatsApp to teach English particularly writing skills in online class. Meanwhile, I gave feedback and evaluation regarding the materials in offline class. Therefore, blended learning can be one of the alternative teaching methods during the COVID-19 pandemic (Lecturer 1, 2021).

Excerpt 7

The description above shows that L1 agreed that blended learning could be one of the alternative teaching methods in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, she used technology like google meet and WhatsApp as a media to teach writing in online class. Further, she provided more explanation and feedback to encourage students' writing skills in offline class. Similarly, L2 also used technology in teaching English particularly reading skills. He particularly made use of WhatsApp group and zoom in teaching reading skills. This has been proved by the following excerpt:

In reading class, I gave material in face-to-face meetings and provide practices or assignments in online classes. For example, when the material for scanning text for the specific context is conducted by face-to-face, I explained what scanning is and what are the tips and tricks for working on long text questions using scanning techniques. Then at the next meeting in the online class, I discussed the previous topic and I also asked for feedback or feedback from students by doing assignments. So that my students can better understand the concepts of the material I convey. (Lecturer 2, 2021).

Excerpt 8

Additionally, L1 added that in teaching writing, she encouraged her students to use digital technology to enhance their academic writing skills. This can be achieved by the utilizing reference management software like Mendeley and Zotero. The need of integrating technology like Mendeley or Zotero in teaching writing is crucial considering that it eases the users in the process of maintaining references. As we have already known that references have played a pivotal role in the process of writing (Wahyuningsih, 2020).

Interestingly, it benefits in incorporating writing skill among the students. The benefits of using Mendeley or Zotero include allowing the users to save some files from databases, have a standalone bibliography based on their preferred citation styles quickly. In addition, it can enhance the instruction of library. Regarding its practice in blended learning, L1 provided some guidelines in the use of Mendeley in writing class through YouTube in online class. Moreover, she asked the students to practice and helped them in their practices during the offline or face-to-face meetings.

The need of integrating and using reference management software in writing has been highlighted by some scholars (Sujit Kamar Basak, 2014; Sujit Kumar Basak, 2014). The use of reference management software in teaching writing has been proved by the following excerpt:

In this digital era, I integrated technology in teaching writing. I used reference management software in writing class. This becomes crucial since it has a lot of benefits in fostering students' writing skill. Indeed, it encourages students in writing. I gave guidelines of using Mendeley through YouTube in online class. Then, I asked students to practice using Mendeley in offline meetings (Lecturer 1, 2021).

Excerpt 9

Therefore, the application of blended learning can be a variation in the learning activities so that students are not only grounded in the classroom physically. Basically, blended learning approach of the mixture, namely the meeting of the offline and the online meeting. The application of blended learning in the learning can be done through the utilization of digital technology with developing e-learning content in the form of teaching materials, learning videos, assignments, discussion forums and an online exam. Further, the innovation of blended learning is badly needed to promote more meaningful learning. One of examples of such innovation is the teaching materials can be visualized in a variety of formats by utilizing the applications like Kahoot, Quizzes, Google Workspace, Jam board, Pear deck, and so on.

3.2 Effects of incorporating English skills using blended learning on Lecturers' Teaching Professionalism

In this digital era, the use of technology in educational field cannot be neglected. The existence of COVID-19 pandemic has altered the educational field including teaching methods, media, and others. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 amidst the pandemic, blended learning was adapted by educators including lecturers in English language teaching. As mentioned earlier, the lecturers (L1 and L2) have adapted blended learning in incorporating English skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Based on the results of interviews, both of L1 and L2 had to provide some strategies or ways of incorporating English skills in a blended learning class. More importantly, the effects of incorporating English skills in blended learning include they had to improve their teaching quality and professionalism since the practice of blended learning is different from the offline classes they had before the pandemic. In blended learning, both L1 and L2 had to foster themselves in encouraging their teaching professionalism. It was achieved by upgrading their teaching competence through participation on seminars, training, workshop related to English language teaching. Moreover,

they learned a lot the utilization of technology, teaching media, materials design, assessment in English language teaching using technology. Indeed, they admitted that they kept encouraging themselves to be literate on integrating technology like social media in English language teaching for the sake of empowering a meaningful teaching quality. More importantly, the rapid advancement of technology has led to bring several chances and challenges to processes of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is a must for the lecturers to stay up to date with technology utilization in English language teaching.

Another effect experienced by the two lecturers (L1 and L2) in teaching English using blended learning is they felt that it is a must for them to improve their academic literacy to gain more insightful perspectives on English language teaching and teacher professionalism. Further, they spent their time reading academic papers from reputable journals and books and accessing numerous sources of academic papers from the internet. Interestingly, they were motivated to write their pedagogical experiences in teaching English and publish it into journals to share their ideas, report the findings and share it to others. It was proven by the following excerpt advocated by L1 and L2:

Honestly, I was challenged by teaching English using blended learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Some preparations including teaching materials, teaching media and the utilization of technology in EFL classrooms are needed particularly in blended learning in which it has offline and online meetings. For instance, in an online meeting, I had to provide online learning platforms like Google Meet. I also accessed some applications to support my English class like using Kahoot, Quizzes and others. At first, I am not too familiar with the use of Kahoot in ELT. During the pandemic, I forced myself to learn a lot of technology utilization. More importantly, I enrich my knowledge through advanced reading and writing from many sources.

Excerpt 10

In more detail, L2 admitted that she was encouraged to improve her teaching quality and professionalism particularly in blended learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, she motivated herself to participate on some leading academic forums like seminar, training and workshop related to technology utilization, teaching media, material design and sources. As she asserted in the following excerpt:

The rapid development of technology has impacted on the practices of English language teaching especially during the pandemic. The use of blended learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic has forced me to stay up to date with the technology utilization in EFL classrooms. I pursued myself to join academic forum such as workshop and seminar in ELT and technology

utilization. Interestingly, online seminars during the COVID-19 has been provided by some scholars freely. Thus, I can join some workshops effectively through Zoom, Google meet and others. Such workshops are beneficial for me in encouraging my teaching professionalism and quality. Besides, I also improve my English competence by enriching advanced literacy both in reading and writing. I did a research, reported and published it in some journals.

Excerpt 11

4. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how the lecturers at one of the Indonesian higher educational institutions incorporate English skills using blended learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on their teaching professionalism. As elaborated earlier, some studies in accordance with blended learning especially in English language teaching have been undertaken by some scholars. However, they did not discuss English skills comprehensively. In other words, the study about the ways in incorporating all English skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing in blended learning has not been explored yet comprehensively. Therefore, this study has tried to explore the ways in integrating all English skills in blended learning. Based on the interviews with the two lecturers, it revealed that there are several ways in incorporating English skills in blended learning class amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

As mentioned before, those include creating a fun class in blended learning using online learning platforms, asking students to have presentation, and explaining materials, reviewing book or observing videos, providing games in EFL classroom, and making use of digital technology in English language teaching. In terms of creating a fun class in blended learning, lecturers could integrate English skills. For instance, in fostering writing skills in online class, students were asked to write something based on the given topic and upload it in social media like Facebook or Instagram. Then, in face-to-face learning, other students were asked to give comment or opinions regarding their peer's works. Further, this could arouse critical thinking among students. Finally, the lecturers have provided feedback and evaluations towards students' writing. Another example is in incorporating speaking skill, students were asked to create videos of English conversation and upload in social media such as YouTube, TikTok and others. In this matter, they were freely using innovation like animation, picture and so on. Meanwhile, their peers were asked to give comments regarding the video. To arouse students' motivation, the lecturers could give appreciation towards the videos made by the students. As asserted by Miles et al., (2018) that giving an appreciation towards students' works is meaningful for the students.

Dealing with incorporating reading skills, the students were assigned to have reading activities from some sources that they want like book, magazine, comic, internet and so forth. Then, they were asked to deliver messages and content from their reading through writing in WhatsApp group consisting of the lecturer and students. Then, in face-to-face learning, the students could tell the content of their reading in front of their friends. Finally, the lecturers provided feedbacks towards the students' reading. In short, teachers could integrate a few English skills in several teaching and learning activities with the same topic in blended learning. This indicates that providing feedback in fostering the English skills among students is badly needed (Dore et al., 2021; Zhai & Gao, 2018).

In accordance with incorporating listening skill in blended learning, the lecturers provided videos or movies containing English materials in online learning through WhatsApp group. Then, the students were asked to listen by themselves at home and analyse about the content about the video or movie. In addition, in face-to-face learning, they were asked to tell something they have learned from the videos or movies in front of the class. In this context, they could practice their speaking skills. Therefore, in this blended learning, the students could practice English skills at the same time.

Beside incorporating English skills, English lecturers can promote character values in blended learning. Indeed, integrating character values in educational setting is crucial in this era (Almerico, 2014; Sa'diyah, 2018; Wahyuningsih, 2017). Based on the interviews, it was found that L1 highlights that the character values can be integrated in blended learning through a number of learning activities. Firstly, discipline values can be realized by making a deal at the beginning of the lecture. The lecturer made contract in line with the implementation of blended learning. Secondly, responsibility values can be realized through the tasks given. Thirdly, honesty values can be realized through observation in face to-face meeting and tasks. Fourthly, cooperation values can be seen through solidity of teamwork and interaction with friends. Finally, tolerance and empathy values can be observed through the attitude and behaviour of students during teaching and learning process. From the above elaborations, it could be deduced that the lecturers could integrate several English skills through the same topic in blended learning particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

From the above-mentioned studies, it revealed that incorporating English skills in EFL classroom could be implemented in blended learning particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding, surely, sharpens the beliefs that teaching English could be practiced not only in offline class but also in online class. Interestingly, it also strengthens the beliefs that English language teachers should adjust the ways, strategies and methods in English language

teaching in every situation especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, several teachers felt doubt about the ways in incorporating English skills in online class since they were accustomed to use offline learning before the pandemic. Moreover, they should have well preparation, implementation, and evaluation in online class. In terms of preparation, for instance, they should design English materials like sending videos, power point, links from internet and others that can be accessed and learned by the students in flexible ways. Meanwhile, in terms of implementation, the teachers should ensure that the students can learn by themselves using clear and comprehensive instructions made by the teachers. Finally, in terms of evaluation, the teachers should provide a comprehensive evaluation regarding the process of English language teaching in blended learning class. In addition, they should find out the shortcomings when teaching English in blended learning and proposing some solutions to overcome them. Importantly, this finding also reflect that they are supposed to develop innovation in English language teaching and their teaching professional development both in offline and online learning for the sake meeting the students' need in acquiring English skills comprehensively.

In accordance with the effects of incorporating English skills using blended learning on the lecturers' teaching professionalism, both L1 and L2 realized that the role of technology is badly crucial to enhance the quality of teaching English particularly in blended learning classes. Indeed, it a must for them to get up to date towards the online platforms used as teaching media. Furthermore, the role of technology can benefit them in accessing several sources of English materials from the internet. Referring to interviews, both L1 and L2 admitted that they were eager to develop their teaching professionalism through learning and acquiring the utilization of technology in English language teaching. They learned many things about online platforms from the internet, participating on seminar, training, and workshop. Further, they tried to share their idea and experiences of teaching published in journals. However, they felt challenges in practicing blended learning in their English classes. These include both L1 and L2 had to arouse their creativity in preparing interesting materials design, accessible and wonderful teaching media, and encouraging students to be more active in blended learning classes. In addition, some students found problems with poor internet connection so that they could not access the materials fluently. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Dahmash(2020) that poor internet connection could be the challenge for students in blended learning classes.

In summary, lecturers nowadays have been challenged to stay up to date with technology utilization in enhancing a better teaching quality. In this context, both L1 and L2 had shared their stories and experiences in practicing blended learning in their English classes. They explained that well preparations such as teaching media, teaching materials, and

learning tools are required to gain successful learning in blended learning classes especially in incorporating English skills. Both L1 and L2 were demanded to encourage creativity in designing English materials, accessing appropriate online platforms, and finding relevant sources of materials from the internet including journals and motivating their students during blended learning classes. In addition, they were challenged by the problem encountered by their students like poor internet connection. In this matter, both L1 and L2 had found strategies to overcome this problem. One of them is by choosing accessible and reachable online platforms used in blended learning especially in incorporating English skills as elaborated above. Finally, these findings promote a pedagogical implication that English skills could be incorporated in blended learning classes with the help of technology utilization. Lecturers were suggested to improve their teaching quality and professionalism along with technology utilization. Moreover, students need supports and encouragements from lecturers, practitioners, and policy makers in educational field.

5. Conclusion

In summary, English language lecturers were supposed to adjust the implementation of English language teaching amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. As reported in the interviews, there was a belief that English language lecturers had rarely used blended learning in English language teaching before the pandemic particularly the ways in incorporating all English skills comprehensively. To fill the gap, they should adopt blended learning in incorporating English skills particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they should have well preparation in blended learning especially in integrating English language skills starting from designing English materials, using various methods and strategies by making use of technology, and evaluating the English language teaching in blended learning. This study reflected that the need of adopting blended learning in English language teaching including the curriculum content and other components needed in blended learning. It is recommended that future scholars conduct studies of blended learning in other fields from various disciplines. By conducting this study, some fruitful information on how to English skills were incorporated comprehensively in blended learning.

6. Acknowledgement

We are so grateful to the lecturers of English Education Department at one of the Indonesian Higher Educations with whom we have accomplished the research. They have given us data and insights about the ways of incorporating English skills in blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Indonesian higher education context.

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