STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON DISTANCE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract || Distance second language learning has emerged as a growing concern within higher education settings, particularly in light of challenges posed by a global pandemic such as Covid-19. This study endeavors to investigate students' perspectives on distance second language learning and the factors impacting said perspectives. The research was carried out via a survey involving students enrolled in various English study programs across multiple universities in Indonesia. Data gathering methods comprised questionnaires and interviews, focusing on facets including social support, flexibility of scheduling, and integration of technology in the learning process. Findings from the study indicate that students generally hold favorable views towards distance second language learning, notwithstanding several obstacles such as technical issues and a preference for traditional face-to-face instruction. The implication of this research underscores the significance of fortifying social support structures and enhancing technology integration in distance learning to enhance student learning experiences.

Keywords || Distance Learning, Second Language, Student Perspectives, Technology Integration

Abstrak || Pembelajaran bahasa kedua jarak jauh telah menjadi perhatian yang meningkat dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi, terutama dalam menghadapi tantangan pandemi global seperti Covid-19. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran bahasa kedua jarak jauh dan faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi persepsi mereka. Penelitian ini dilakukan melalui survei terhadap mahasiswa dari berbagai program studi bahasa Inggris di beberapa perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi kuesioner dan wawancara, dengan fokus pada aspek-aspek seperti dukungan sosial, fleksibilitas waktu, dan integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa cenderung memiliki persepsi positif terhadap pembelajaran bahasa kedua jarak jauh, meskipun masih ada beberapa tantangan yang perlu diatasi, seperti masalah teknis dan preferensi terhadap pembelajaran tatap muka. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya memperkuat dukungan sosial dan meningkatkan integrasi teknologi dalam pembelajaran jarak jauh guna meningkatkan pengalaman pembelajaran mahasiswa.

Katakunci || Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh, Bahasa Kedua, Persepsi Mahasiswa, Integrasi Teknologi

Introduction

Second language acquisition has increasingly garnered attention across various educational institutions worldwide, given the crucial role of language proficiency in today's globalized era, which demands robust cross-cultural communication skills from individuals. However, with the advancement of information and communication technologies, particularly the internet, approaches to second language learning have undergone significant transformations, reflecting fundamental shifts in both learning and teaching paradigms. One of the most notable changes is the advent of distance learning or online learning, which has revolutionized the landscape of education.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has expedited the adoption of distance learning in numerous educational institutions, including within the realm of second language acquisition. This profound shift compels students from diverse regions to acclimate to novel learning methodologies that leverage technology as the primary conduit for instruction. In the context of second language acquisition, this necessitates the development of innovative pedagogical strategies and the utilization of technological tools to facilitate dynamic interaction between educators and learners, despite physical separation.

While the challenges of adaptation cannot be understated, there are also burgeoning opportunities in second language acquisition through distance learning modalities. With broader access to digital resources, students can explore diverse learning materials, engage with language communities, and deepen their comprehension of the associated cultures. Thus, second language acquisition in the digital age transcends mere linguistic proficiency, encompassing a broader scope of cultural enrichment and cross-cultural experiences.

Consequently, the transformation of second language acquisition through a distance-based approach underscores the significance of flexibility, adaptability, and technology utilization in the contemporary educational landscape. Nevertheless, the challenges of fostering quality interactions between educators and learners, as well as sustaining learning motivation, remain paramount concerns that must be addressed to ensure successful second language acquisition in this digital era.

Previous research has furnished an overview of second language acquisition, encompassing both traditional and distance learning contexts. Numerous studies indicate that distance-based second

language learning holds promise in enhancing accessibility, flexibility, and interactivity within the learning milieu. A study conducted by Rosita et al. (2023) revealed that students enrolled in the English language education program at Makassar State University hold favorable perceptions of online instruction. Their findings suggest that students perceive online learning as affording them the flexibility to access educational materials at their convenience, irrespective of location or time, indicating its efficacy in facilitating material access and assimilation.

Additionally, research by Fidalgo et al. (2020) underscores the prevalence of Distance Education (DE) courses and programs across numerous universities, catering to diverse educational needs. Their study highlights students' interest in DE despite concerns regarding time management, motivation, and English language proficiency. It emphasizes the imperative of gauging students' perceptions, attitudes, and receptiveness toward DE to inform the development of programs aligned with students' expectations and requirements.

Moreover, Rukmi (2021) delves into the perceptions of EFL students at the English Department of STKIP PGRI Jombang regarding distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study reveals students' positive attitudes toward the utilization of online collaborative platforms for English language instruction. Employing a descriptive case methodology utilizing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the research demonstrates students' favorable reception of distance learning via online collaborative platforms.

Furthermore, Bahari et al. (2022) elucidates students' experiences in distance learning utilizing the Project-based Learning approach. Their research underscores students' perception of the efficacy of Project-based Learning in comprehending educational materials, particularly amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings offer valuable insights into the amalgamation of distance learning with a project-based approach as a viable alternative during pandemic scenarios.

Recently, research conducted by Abbasi et al. (2020) shed light on students' attitudes towards e-learning during the lockdown period. This study revealed that the majority of students harbor a negative outlook on e-learning, expressing a preference for traditional face-to-face instruction. By delving into the challenges encountered by students in adapting to remote learning, particularly in emergency situations like the pandemic, this research offers valuable insights.

Drawing from this review of literature, it becomes evident that distance learning elicits a spectrum of reactions among students, ranging from positive to negative. Factors such as flexibility, time management, motivation, and technological proficiency significantly impact students' perceptions of distance learning. Hence, this research endeavor aims to enhance our comprehension of students' attitudes towards distance second language acquisition by examining the underlying factors influencing these perceptions.

Amidst these transformative shifts, it becomes imperative to grasp students' viewpoints on distance second language learning. This holds critical importance as students' perceptions can profoundly influence their motivation, engagement, and academic outcomes in second language acquisition. Questions arise regarding the extent of students' engagement in distance second language learning, their familiarity with the technological tools utilized, and the factors shaping their perceptions.

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive investigation into students' perceptions of distance second language acquisition. By identifying factors influencing these perceptions and delving into students' experiences with technology in the context of language learning, this study endeavors to furnish valuable insights for educational institutions. Ultimately, these insights will aid in the design and management of distance second language learning programs that are tailored to meet the needs and preferences of students effectively.

Technology in Second Language Learning

The incorporation of information and communication technology into second language acquisition encompasses diverse technological platforms and tools meticulously tailored to bolster the learning process, particularly within the burgeoning domain of distance education. This encompasses the utilization of online collaborative platforms facilitating direct engagement between educators and learners, including video conferencing platforms, virtual discussion forums, and web-based learning portals (Salaberry, 2007). Furthermore, mobile applications have emerged as indispensable assets within the realm of second language learning technology, offering a plethora of tools catering to various learning endeavors, spanning from vocabulary drills to listening and speaking exercises (Klimova & Al-Obaydi, 2023).

Learning software constitutes another pivotal facet of the second language learning technology landscape. This software spans a spectrum of categories, ranging from computer-based programs furnishing interactive exercises and automated evaluations to speech and text recognition software augmenting students' listening and reading proficiencies (Levy, 2009). Consequently, the integration of technology into second language learning not only streamlines access to educational resources but also fosters a vibrant and interactive learning milieu for students.

Moreover, the integration of technology into second language acquisition extends to the assimilation of novel and continuously evolving learning tools, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality technologies, which enrich students' learning encounters by simulating real-life scenarios within a second language milieu. Consequently, through judicious integration of information and communication technology, second language acquisition can be rendered more engaging, efficacious, and pertinent to students' exigencies in this digital age.

Effectiveness of Distance Learning

Distance second language learning has been acknowledged as an efficacious approach in attaining diverse learning objectives. The efficacy and success of this instructional method can be gauged through a range of indicators, encompassing students' academic accomplishments, their level of engagement in the learning process, and the degree of satisfaction they derive from the overall learning experience (Kusmaryono et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, when assessing the efficacy of distance second language learning, it is imperative to consider a myriad of variables that could impact students' perceptions and learning outcomes. These variables encompass internal factors, such as individual student attributes like their proficiency in technology, learning motivation, and distinct learning styles that may vary from one student to another (Liu & Yen, 2014; Yue, 2022). Additionally, external factors also exert a significant influence, including the quality of instruction imparted by educators, the level of technical support extended to students, and the policies and procedures instituted by educational establishments to bolster distance learning (Faramarzi et al., 2015; Wardhani, 2020).

By taking into account these diverse factors, we can comprehensively grasp the efficacy of distance second language

learning and pinpoint areas where enhancements or refinements could be instituted to enrich the overall student learning experience. Consequently, it is imperative for educational institutions to continually monitor and assess the integration of technology in second language learning, ensuring that students receive the requisite support and resources to realize their full learning potential.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a conceptual framework that elucidates the process of technology acceptance and adoption by individuals, with a specific emphasis on how individuals' perceptions regarding the usefulness and ease of use of a technology influence their intention to adopt said technology (Wicaksono, 2022). In the context of this study, TAM furnishes a robust theoretical underpinning for comprehending how students perceive the utilization of technology in distance second language learning.

TAM acknowledges that an individual's perception of the utility of technology, namely the extent to which the technology is perceived as beneficial in attaining specific objectives, as well as perceptions of its ease of use, will shape the individual's attitudes and intentions toward adopting the technology (Davis, 1993). In the realm of distance second language learning, students will formulate their perceptions regarding the utility of technology in enhancing their grasp of the second language and skills, as well as the ease with which the technology can be employed within the learning environment.

By employing the TAM framework, research endeavors can investigate the factors influencing students' perceptions of technology utilization in distance second language learning, encompassing internal factors such as prior technology experience, individual learning preferences, and proficiency levels in technology, as well as external factors such as instructional quality, technical support, and institutional policies. Consequently, the application of TAM within the domain of second language learning can yield invaluable insights for crafting learning initiatives that are more efficacious and aligned with student requirements.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study is a mixed methods approach. This methodology enables researchers to integrate and

analyze qualitative and quantitative data concurrently, thereby yielding a more comprehensive insight into students' perceptions of distance second language learning. Consequently, this study will amalgamate quantitative data analysis via questionnaires with qualitative data analysis through interviews. The study population comprises students enrolled in a second language program at a university in Indonesia offering distance second language learning. A sample of 30 student respondents was randomly selected, with inclusion criteria stipulating participation in a long-distance second language study program and completion of at least one semester of coursework.

The primary instrument utilized is a questionnaire tailored to assess students' perceptions of distance second language learning. This questionnaire comprises two main segments: the first part gauges quantitative variables such as student satisfaction, learning motivation, and perceptions of learning efficacy, while the second part includes open-ended inquiries to elicit qualitative feedback concerning students' experiences and suggestions regarding long-distance learning. Quantitative data will be collected via online distribution of questionnaires to eligible students. The questionnaire will be accessible through a universally accessible online platform, allowing respondents ample time for completion. Subsequently, students willing to partake in interviews will be purposively selected. Interviews will be conducted either online or in person, according to student preference, and recorded for transcription and further analysis.

Quantitative data garnered from questionnaires will be analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as mean, median, and percentage. Inferential analyses, including paired t-tests, will be conducted to compare perceptual differences among various student groups based on specific variables. Qualitative data obtained from interviews will undergo thematic analysis, wherein transcripts will be scrutinized and coded to identify overarching themes and emerging patterns. Subsequently, the researcher will synthesize these findings into a narrative elucidating a deeper comprehension of students' perceptions of distance second language learning and the influencing factors therein.

Results

The respondents in this study comprised students enrolled in a second language program who were participating in distance learning. Demographic data indicates that there were 39 respondents, with the majority being women (31 individuals) compared to men (8 individuals).

The ages of the respondents varied, with the majority falling within the 18-25 year age range. Most of the respondents were in their fifth semester (9 individuals) and third semester (13 individuals), while the remainder were in their seventh semester (8 individuals). A total of 30 respondents had previous experience in taking long-distance courses or training before engaging in this second language learning endeavor.

Engagement in Distance Second Language Learning

Analysis of data regarding involvement in long-distance second language learning revealed that distance learning facilitated participation in discussions and interactive activities for 9 respondents (30%), while 21 individuals (70%) did not perceive this effect. Additionally, 23 individuals (77%) felt engaged in the learning tasks, while 7 individuals (23%) did not experience such engagement. Moreover, the majority of respondents, namely 26 individuals (87%), felt motivated by distance learning, while 4 individuals (13%) did not share this sentiment.

Table 1. Effectiveness of Distance Learning in Fostering Engagement and Collaboration

No	Questioners	Responses			
		Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	Distance learning fosters participation in discussions and interactive activities.	9	30%	21	70%
2	Distance learning promotes engagement in learning tasks.	23	77%	7	23%
3	Distance learning cultivates motivation to participate in learning.	26	87%	4	13%
4	Distance learning facilitates active learning and problem-solving.	18	60%	12	40%
5	Distance learning is effective for fostering collaboration among students.	14	47%	16	53%

Furthermore, distance learning enabled 18 individuals (60%) to feel actively involved in learning and problem-solving, whereas 12 individuals (40%) did not share this perception. Finally, only 14 individuals (47%) felt that distance learning effectively promoted collaboration among students, while 16 individuals (53%) did not agree with this viewpoint.

Learning Experience Using Technology

The results of data analysis concerning learning experiences utilizing technology revealed that 26 individuals (87%) found the platform or

application used in distance learning to be user-friendly, while 4 individuals (13%) did not share this sentiment. Furthermore, the majority, specifically 23 individuals (77%), possessed adequate access to devices and internet connections to support distance second language learning, whereas 7 individuals (23%) did not. Additionally, 24 individuals (80%) utilized interactive features within the learning platform, such as polls and virtual whiteboards, while 6 individuals (20%) did not engage with these features.

Table 2. Evaluation of Distance Second Language Learning Environment

No	Questioners	Responses			
		Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	The platform or application used in distance learning is user-friendly.	26	87%	4	13%
2	Sufficient access to devices and internet connections is available to support distance second language learning.	23	77%	7	23%
3	Interactive features within the learning platform, such as polls, virtual whiteboards, or other collaborative tools.	24	80%	6	20%
4	The audio and video quality during distance second language learning sessions is satisfactory.	25	83%	5	17%
5	Challenges in accessing or utilizing digital learning materials provided in distance second language learning.	4	13%	26	87%
6	The technology employed in distance second language learning aids comprehension of the learning material.	20	67%	10	33%

Moreover, the majority, comprising 25 individuals (83%), expressed satisfaction with the quality of audio and video during the learning sessions, whereas 5 individuals (17%) did not share this satisfaction. Furthermore, only 4 individuals (13%) encountered difficulties in accessing or utilizing the digital learning materials provided, while 26 individuals (87%) faced no such challenges. Finally, 20 individuals (67%) felt that the technology utilized in distance learning aided in their understanding of the learning material, while 10 individuals (33%) did not perceive this benefit.

Statistical Analysis

The table below presents comprehensive results from a paired samples test concerning Engagement in Distance Second Language Learning.

Analysis entailed paired sample tests, examining discrepancies in responses across different facets of learning. These findings offer preliminary insights into the role of students' perceptions and engagement in second language acquisition within distance learning environments.

Table 3. Paired Sample Test on Engagement in Distance Second Language Learning

					95% confidence interval of difference				
Paired Differences									
		Mean	Std. Deviasi	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair	"Yes" and "No" Responses	6	-13.64	6.09	-10.886	22.886	-0.98	4	.000

The results of the paired t-test, conducted with a significance level of 0.05, indicated statistically that the null hypothesis (H0) was accepted. This signifies that, based on the analysis, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is no significant positive correlation between Distance Learning and increased motivation in Second Language Learning. Consequently, these findings suggest that, within the specified timeframe and parameters, distance learning methods do not significantly impact students' level of motivation in learning a second language.

Additionally, the table below presents detailed results from paired sample tests concerning Learning Experiences Using Technology. This analysis was conducted through a paired sample test, comparing differences in how learning experiences utilizing technology influence students' perceptions of second language learning, as well as the level of engagement that may occur within a distance learning context.

Table 4. Paired Sample Test on Learning Experience Using Technology

				95% confidence interval of difference
Paired Differences				

		Mean	Std. Deviasi	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair	"Yes" and "No" Responses	12.33	-8.29	3.383	3.632	21.028	-3.65	5	.000

The results of the paired t-test concerning Learning Experiences Using Technology indicate, with a significance level of 0.05, that there is substantial evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H0). Consequently, based on the outcomes of this analysis, it can be inferred that there exists a significant positive correlation between Learning Experience Using Technology and the efficacy of Second Language Learning within the context of distance learning. This suggests that the quality of the learning experience utilizing technology directly impacts the effectiveness of distance second language learning.

Moreover, according to the most recent data gathered, the majority of respondents (73%) expressed that video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet were deemed more effective than Learning Management Systems (LMS) and other online learning resources in facilitating remote second language learning. This underscores that real-time interactions via video conference platforms offer a more dynamic and interactive learning environment for students, thereby enhancing the overall second language acquisition process.

Table 5. Effective Devices or Applications for Distance Learning

No	Questioners	Responses				
		Zoom/Google Meet	LMS (Learning Management System)	Mobile Apps	Online Discussion Forum	e-books/learning video
1	Effective devices or applications for distance learning	22 (73%)	3 (10%)	-	-	5 (17%)

Based on the research findings, it can be inferred that distance second language learning significantly influences student learning experiences. Despite encountering some obstacles, such as limited participation in

discussions and challenges in utilizing technology, the majority of respondents reported feeling engaged and content with the distance learning experience. Furthermore, a positive correlation exists between distance learning and the effectiveness of second language acquisition, suggesting that leveraging technology in second language learning contexts can yield substantial benefits.

Factors Influencing Student Motivation in Distance Second Language Learning

The analysis of factors influencing student motivation in long-distance second language learning yielded the following insights, as detailed in the table below:

Table 6. Perceptions of Distance Second Language Learning

No	Questioners	Responses			
		Yes		No	
		Total	%	Total	%
1	Social support from lecturers/instructors and fellow students enhances motivation and self-confidence in long-distance second language learning.	23	77%	7	23%
2	Lecturers/instructors are highly responsive to questions or issues raised during learning.	12	40%	18	60%
3	Constructive feedback from lecturers/instructors holds significant importance in learning.	20	67%	10	33%
4	The flexibility of the distance learning schedule is highly commendable.	27	90%	3	10%
5	The impact of technical difficulties (e.g., internet connection problems, incompatible devices) is considerable.	16	53%	14	47%
6	Your learning environment (both physical and virtual) fosters concentration and focus during learning.	11	37%	19	63%
7	The integration of technology in distance second language learning effectively achieves learning goals.	16	53%	14	47%

Responses concerning social support from lecturers/teachers and fellow students, a factor influencing student motivation in long-distance second language learning, revealed that 23 out of 30 respondents (77%) expressed that such support heightened their motivation and confidence in distance second language learning, while 7 respondents

(23%) did not share this sentiment. Furthermore, regarding the responsiveness of lecturers/teachers to questions or issues raised during learning, only 12 respondents (40%) indicated that lecturers/teachers were highly responsive, while 18 other respondents (60%) did not perceive this level of responsiveness. As for constructive feedback from lecturers/teachers, 20 respondents (67%) emphasized its significance in learning, while 10 other respondents (33%) did not perceive it as crucial. Regarding Time Flexibility in the Learning Schedule, 27 respondents (90%) expressed satisfaction with the flexibility offered, whereas only 3 respondents (10%) did not. Concerning the impact of Technical Difficulties, such as internet connectivity issues and device compatibility, 16 respondents (53%) highlighted the substantial impact on the learning experience, while 14 other respondents (47%) did not perceive it as significant. In terms of Learning Environment support, only 11 respondents (37%) felt that their learning environment fostered concentration and focus during learning, while 19 other respondents (63%) did not share this perception. Finally, regarding Technology Integration in Distance Second Language Learning, 16 respondents (53%) deemed it effective in achieving learning objectives, while 14 other respondents (47%) did not perceive it as such.

Based on this analysis, it becomes evident that social support from lecturers/teachers and fellow students, along with the flexibility of the learning schedule, are crucial factors for motivating students in long-distance second language learning. However, there are still areas requiring improvement, such as the responsiveness of lecturers/teachers to questions or issues, the provision of constructive feedback, and the establishment of a supportive learning environment. Moreover, the considerable impact of technical difficulties on students' learning experiences cannot be overlooked. While technology integration is deemed important, there are respondents who do not entirely concur.

Discussion

The research results indicate that the majority of students hold a positive perception of this learning method. Data illustrates that most respondents find distance learning advantageous in accessing learning materials, as evidenced by the high satisfaction levels with the flexibility of their learning schedules and the perceived assistance of technology in comprehending learning material. However, certain considerations

arise, such as the responsiveness of lecturers/teachers to student inquiries or issues, along with the potential disruption caused by technical difficulties to the learning experience.

Furthermore, several factors have emerged as pivotal influences on students' motivation toward distance second language learning. Social support from lecturers/teachers and peers significantly impacts student motivation and self-confidence in distance learning. Additionally, the flexibility of the learning schedule plays a substantial role in enhancing students' positive perceptions of this learning approach. Nonetheless, the lack of responsiveness from lecturers/teachers to student inquiries or issues, alongside the adverse effects of technical difficulties, such as internet connectivity problems, can detrimentally affect student perceptions.

While many students deem distance learning effective, this research identifies both similarities and discrepancies with previous findings (Abbasi et al., 2020; Bahari et al., 2022; Fidalgo et al., 2020; Rukmi, 2021). A significant similarity lies in the importance of social support and interaction among students, proven to bolster student motivation in distance learning, aligning with the current research findings. However, discrepancies exist, such as the varying levels of responsiveness from lecturers or instructors to student inquiries, potentially lower within the scope of this research.

The presence of these distinctions underscores the complexity of the dynamics inherent in distance learning, shaped by diverse contextual and institutional factors. Thus, this research not only corroborates prior findings but also offers a comprehensive understanding of how specific factors, such as the responsiveness of lecturers or instructors, can impact students' learning experiences in long-distance second language learning.

This study not only enhances comprehension of students' perceptions of distance second language learning but also furnishes an in-depth elucidation of the factors influencing these perceptions. Such insights can inform the development of more effective learning practices tailored to student needs in distance learning contexts and provide guidance for future research endeavors in this field.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the conducted research, it can be inferred that students generally hold favorable perceptions of long-distance second language learning. They perceive online learning as offering flexibility

that facilitates easier access to learning materials. Factors such as social support from lecturers/instructors, scheduling flexibility, and technological integration also shape students' perspectives on distance learning. However, persistent challenges like technical issues and a preference for face-to-face instruction remain notable concerns.

The outcomes of this research carry significant implications for the realm of distance second language learning. Firstly, educational institutions must prioritize the provision of adequate social support to students engaging in distance learning. Support from lecturers/teachers and peers can bolster students' motivation and confidence in participating in online education. Additionally, efforts to enhance technology integration in learning should persist to optimize the attainment of learning objectives. Implementing project-based learning and leveraging online collaborative platforms can serve as effective strategies in facilitating distance second language learning.

Subsequent research endeavors could delve deeper into the factors influencing students' perceptions of distance second language learning, encompassing psychological and social dimensions that may exert substantial influence. Moreover, longitudinal studies could be conducted to track the evolution of student perceptions of distance learning over time, along with its ramifications on academic achievement and overall student well-being.

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