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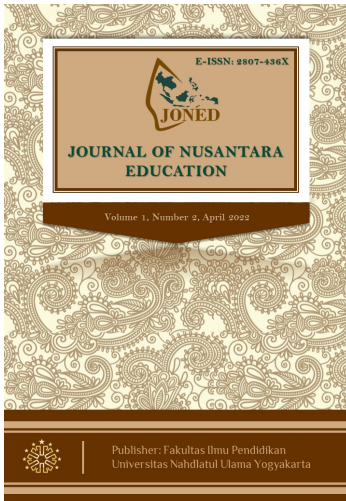
All research articles in this issue were authored/co-authored by 5 authors from 5 institutions: Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya, Universitas Pekalongan, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, and Universitas PGRI Madiun.

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Students' Perception Towards Blended Learning Using English Discoveries at the University of Muhammadiyah Surabaya

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Abstrak

Dalam upaya meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa di universitas swasta di Surabaya, platform *English Discoveries* diterapkan melalui metode *blended learning* pada proses pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di semua fakultas. Para dosen telah diberikan pelatihan tentang penggunaan *English Discoveries* dalam metode *blended learning*. Sedangkan bagi mahasiswa yang baru dikenalkan dengan media pembelajaran baru dalam metode *blended learning* harus beradaptasi dengan pengalaman belajar bahasa Inggris yang berbeda dari sebelumnya. Persepsi mahasiswa sangat penting untuk diketahui sebagai bahan evaluasi dalam proses pembelajaran selanjutnya. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa terhadap pembelajaran *blended learning* menggunakan *English Discoveries,* dampaknya terhadap kemampuan berbahasa Inggris, kelebihan dan kendala ketika pembelajaran menggunakan metode *blended learning*. Untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa, penelitian ini menyebarkan angket kepada 329 mahasiswa dari 7 fakultas. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa *English Discoveries* merupakan platform yang mudah digunakan, serta efektif dan efisien dalam membantu siswa belajar dalam *blended learning.* Tahapan pembelajaran yang terdapat dalam *English* kemampuan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa Para mahasiswa memiliki banyak waktu untuk mengeksplorasi materi dan salah satu keterampilan bahasa Inggris mereka karena metode pembelajaran yang fleksibel. Di sisi lain, mahasiswa mengalami kendala dalam hal koneksi jaringan internet yang tidak stabil dan biaya kuota internet yang mahal. Oleh karena itu pembelajaran harus dipersiapkan dengan baik sebelum memulai untuk menciptakan suasana belajar yang nyaman, hal ini membutuhkan kerjasama yang baik antara dosen dan mahasiswa dalam proses pembelajaran.
Kata Kunci: persepsi siswa, *blended learning, english discoveries*

Abstract

In improving the students' English abilities at private institutions in Surabaya, the English Discoveries platform was used in the English learning process in all faculties using the blended learning technique. The lecturers followed the instructions on utilizing English Discoveries in a Blended Learning environment. Meanwhile, students unfamiliar with new learning media as part of the blended learning technique must adjust to a new English learning experience. Student perceptions were essential to understand as evaluation for the next learning process. As a result, the purpose of this study was to find out what students feel about blended learning with English Discoveries, how it affected English language abilities, and what strengths and limits students had while utilizing the blended learning technique. This study distributed questionnaires to 329 students from seven faculties to determine student perceptions. This study showed that English Discoveries was an easy-to-use platform that aided and delivered a learning experience for students participating in blended learning activities. English students' English skills comprised stages of learning. Because of the flexible learning techniques, the students had plenty of time to examine the topic and practice one of their English abilities. On the other hand, students had issues with unstable internet network connections. As a result, learning must be carefully prepared before beginning to establish a pleasant learning environment, which necessitates strong cooperation between lecturers and students throughout the learning process.
Keywords: students' perception, blended learning, English discoveries

Introduction

Information and Communication and Technology has been used as a medium in the learning process so that learning that initially used traditional methods has turned into modern techniques that use technology. One of the contemporary learning that utilizes ICT is e-learning or online learning, but this learning is not fully effective if it is applied as a whole, according to (Husamah, 2014)The biggest obstacle to e-learning is direct interactivity between students and the instructor. Like conventional or face-to-face learning, which has several blocks, learning emerges that combines the best aspects of online learning and face-to-face learning to get the significance of learning and minimize the existing obstacles.

(Husamah, 2014) emphasizes that: Blended learning combines the benefits of online learning, scheduled face-to-face activities, and real-world application. (Husamah, 2014) explains that blended learning has three characteristics. First, learning incorporates a variety of delivery methods, educational models, learning styles, and tech sophisticated media. Second, a combination of face-to-face teaching, independent learning, and online learning are supported by an effective variety of delivery, teaching, and learning styles. Third, teachers and parents of students have an equally important role, teachers as facilitators and parents as supporters. What distinguishes between Blended Learning and Online Learning, according to (Husamah, 2014)it is said to be an online program if more than 80 percent of program content is delivered online, and it is said to be a blended program if 30 to 79 percent of the program's content is delivered online. However, in practice, Blended Learning is not just learning supported by hardware such as computers, laptops, and smartphones. Blended Learning also requires support from software, or it can be said as a learning media (platform).

The recent period of the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted learning processes worldwide, forcing every educational institution to rely on the internet network for learning sustainability. As a result, mixed learning which was initially a combination of online learning and face-to-face learning was forced to fully online; this made educational institutions have to find ways to keep interacting between students and teachers directly through online media as a substitute for face-to-face learning.

Online learning is divided into two types, namely synchronous online learning and asynchronous online learning. Synchronous online learning is online learning that provides direct or real-time learning experiences that are supported by media such as zoom, google classroom, google meet, and others. This learning has become a favorite alternative lately because it meets the needs of face-to-face learning that cannot be implemented.

Moreover, this learning makes students more aware of the interaction relationship to exchange ideas. However, synchronous learning depends on technical aspects such as the device's condition, the stability of the internet network, and the cost of the quota that must be incurred. While asynchronous online learning is more flexible because it does not have to be done at certain times, this type of learning is usually supported by email media or even social media such as WhatsApp. However, this type of learning can eliminate the touch of social interaction and foster apathy from students because there is no direct interaction.

The successful implementation of a blended learning platform requires a step-by-step strategy planned in a specific sequence. Schools, Universities, and networks should start with mixed learning objectives and models, then decide on platforms and content, followed by tool selection. Choosing a learning platform must have several beneficial characteristics for students and teachers. When implementing a blended learning platform, it is good to start with the end in mind and focus on the program objectives and the students that will be impacted. Depending on the goals for the blended learning environment, several different models may be appropriate to meet those objectives. The learning platform must have a variety of characteristics to maximize its efficacy in blended learning classes. The single-entry system for students helps the program be more accessible to students who will use it. Platforms with easy list or grouping features help teachers with class management and organization. Schools should avoid costly custom development and long-term contracts on a platform to save costs and allow flexibility in making modifications to increase delivery. In order to manage a competency-based learning environment, the platform must also prioritize

standards-based grade books and reporting functions.

English Discoveries (ED) platform is blended learning for learning English created by ETS Subsidiary, Edusoft Ltd. ED has many materials to study that will help improve the English language skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation). ED classified learning into ten courses that each course consists of 10 units with various topics. There are three levels of learning at ED to make learning English as efficient as possible.

First, the students need to look into the areas where they might be able to learn more about a certain topic. Practice is a section of the lesson during which students do exercises to reinforce what they have already learned. The test is the final portion that assesses the knowledge of the subject. Discussion Time Forum, Online Magazine, Games, Talking Idiom, and Grammar Book are just a few of the tools that ED provides to help them increase their English knowledge and practice certain English abilities. ED has a few benefits. To begin with, integrating the learning methods in ED will reduce the saturation of the learning process and improve motivation and interest. Second, learning may be done at any time and in any location. Third, learning may be done independently and quickly.

This research on blended learning using English Discoveries was conducted to determine students' perceptions and the blended learning method applied at the private University in Surabaya. In 2019, this University had just implemented the blended learning method in English courses in each faculty. This effort is intended to improve students' knowledge and English language skills specifically to increase the TOEIC test scores held annually as a graduation requirement and support graduates to find a job.(Suparto et al., 2020)found that English Discoveries may make the English learning process in the Intensive Program more practical and efficient. Nonetheless, there are some obstacles when using English Discoveries.

The second study is from (Talis, 2017), which showed that the students positively perceived implementing Blended Learning method in English language teaching.

The third study is from(Arnita, 2020). It portrays that the result of the research is that teachers use blended learning divided into two parts; online and offline (face to face). Generally, they were given free ways to design the learning activities. As a result, the teachers perceived some advantages when using blended learning to teach English in an intensive program. The advantages are categorized into three aspects: teaching and learning processes, students' learning environment, and teachers' professional development.

On the other hand, teachers also faced challenges when implementing blended learning in English intensive programs. Those challenges are categorized into three aspects: motivation, technological support, experience, and knowledge. The findings highlight that the institution should continue the program, do regular evaluations, and equip teachers with training to improve their running ability (De Montreuil Carmona & Irgang dos Santos, 2020)

According to previous research, the introduction of blended learning employing the Discovery Learning platform positively influenced students' English learning. However, there must be some restrictions and barriers associated with its application. As a result, to provide better learning in a blended setting, the authors of this study want to look more closely at how students respond to the implementation of blended learning using the Discovery Learning platform, not only to define the benefits but also to examine the limitations and challenges that may arise during its use.

Method

The setting of this research was at the private University in Surabaya. The time of this research was conducted in February 2021 with the total number of populations is 1852 students.

The method of this research used a survey design. Survey research design is a procedure in quantitative analysis. The researcher manages to survey a sample or an entire population to describe the population's attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and characteristics. According to (Creswell, 2012), Survey research collects quantitative data using a questionnaire or interview and statistically analyzes the data to describe trends in response to a question.

The sample of this research is taken from Slovin formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

n   : the sample size
N   : the population size
e   : margin of error (5% = 0,05)

$$n = \frac{1852}{1 + (1852 \ x \ 0,05^2)}$$
$$n = \frac{1852}{1 + (1852 \ x \ 0,0025)}$$
$$n = \frac{1852}{1 + 4,63}$$
$$n = \frac{1852}{5,63}$$
$$n = 328,95$$
$$n = 329$$

The sampling of this research used random disproportion sampling. According to the calculation, the sample of this research consists were 329 students from 7 faculty, are; Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economics and Business, Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Islamic Religion, and Faculty of Psychology.

Data for this study was gathered using a modified questionnaire. The researchers began giving questions, which examined students' perceptions of English Discoveries. The questionnaire comprises four-point Likert-type scales to which the researcher provides numeric scores: 4=Strongly Agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree. The statement before is adapted from (Amalia, 2018) but the researcher changed it into 4 points Likert-type scales because to avoid "neutral" or "undecided" options when using five scales. The questionnaire is divided into three aspects namely the platform accessibility, the platform utility and the limitation of using English Discovery platform in blended setting.

The following are data collection procedures and techniques:

(1) The researcher studied blended learning and English discoveries before making the questionnaire. Then, (2) The researcher validated the questionnaire to the expert. The researcher revised it. (3) The researcher uploaded the questionnaire to a google form. (4) The researcher collected the WhatsApp number of the research participants and classified the sample in the WhatsApp group based on the faculty. (5) The researcher shared the questionnaire with each group and asked each participant to fill out the questionnaire. (6) The researcher collected the questionnaire from the participants.

Results and Discussion

To obtain responses towards this platform, the researcher created a questionnaire which consists of three aspects, first accessibility, then platform utilities, and limitation of using the English Discovery Platform in a blended way. The following is the result of the questionnaire distributed to 392 respondents from seven faculties.

Table 1
Respondents by Faculty Distribution

| No.	Faculty	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1.	Faculty of Engineering	87	25.1%
2.	Faculty of Psychology	12	3.5%
3.	Faculty of Teacher Training and Education	76	21.9%
4.	Faculty of Islamic Religion	36	10.4%
5.	Faculty of Economics and Business	59	17.0%
6.	Faculty of Law	18	5.2%
7.	Faculty of Health Sciences	59	17.0%
	Total Respondents	329	100%

According to the above pie chart, the respondents' distribution from seven faculties is as follow, 25.1% respondents from the Faculty of Engineering, 3.5% respondents from the Faculty of Psychology, 21.9% from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, 10.4% from the Faculty of Islamic Religion, 17.0% from the Faculty of Economics and Business, 5.2% from Faculty of Law, and 17.0% from Faculty of Health Sciences.

The Aspect of Platform Accessibility
In general, English Discoveries is an accessible platform that can be operated through laptops, pc, and smartphones. It can be shown from the following pie chart.
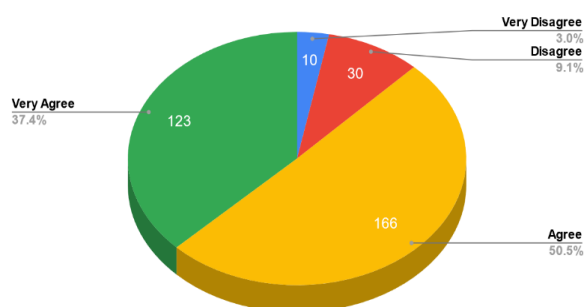
Chart 1
English Discoveries can be easily accessed through computers and smartphones anytime and anywhere.
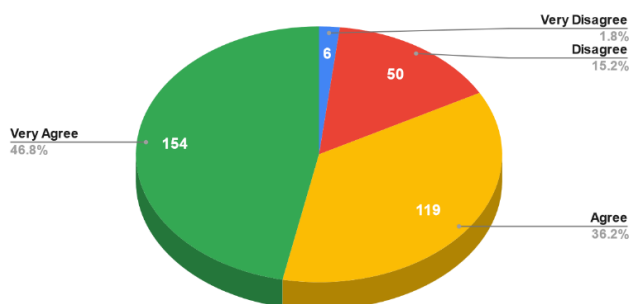
It can be seen that around 46.8% of respondents show their enthusiast with the practicality of this platform. At the same time, only 15.2% of them stated their disagreement. It shows that there is no issue related to this platform utility.

Chart 2
It is easy to understand the features contained in English Discoveries.

Then, according to the above pie chart, it is figured out that about 50.5% of respondents recognize the features of English Discoveries effortlessly. Whereas, there is only 9.1% of respondents take time to identify the features.

The findings demonstrate that the English Discoveries platform is highly valuable and significant in the eyes of the students, as seen by the results above. The students find English Discoveries to be simple to use and comprehend the features. They can also use English Discoveries to aid in the integrated learning process

The Platform Utilities
Related to this aspect, three statements are asked to the respondents. First, how helpful the English Discoveries platform assist students to learn English in a blended way. Second, English Discoveries improves their overall English skills by studying the material in one day through a 3-step process (Explore, Practice and Test). Third, it is convenient to learn independently and use online sources.

Chart 3
**English Discovery is a helpful tool for blended learning.**
Along with the implementation of
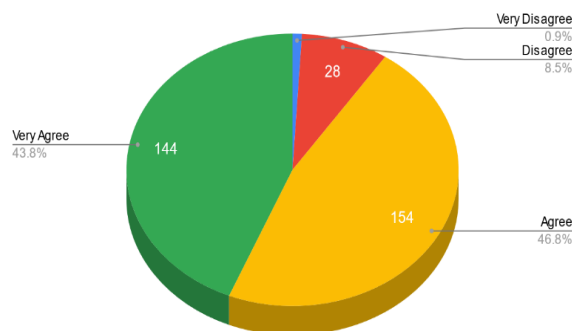
blended learning to support beneficial learning activities, it can be viewed that 46.8% of respondents agree with how this platform is useful. In contrast, there is only 8.5% disagree. The result indicates that applying blended learning using English Discoveries is advantageous.

Chart 4
English Discoveries assists in the improvement of overall English abilities through a three-step approach of studying a topic (Explore, Practice and Test)
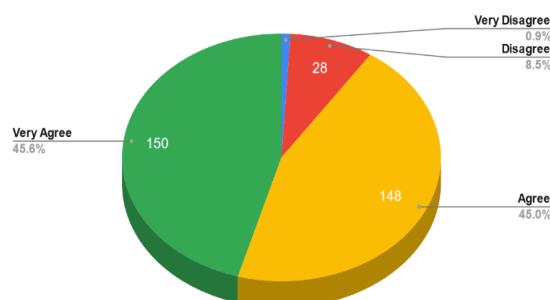
The results demonstrate that this platform is helpful in assisting students in learning English through English Discovery Learning. This is proven by the presence of 45.6 % who strongly agree with the platform's utility and only 8.5 percent who disagree.

Chart 5
It is convenient to study the material autonomously and to use the web resources.
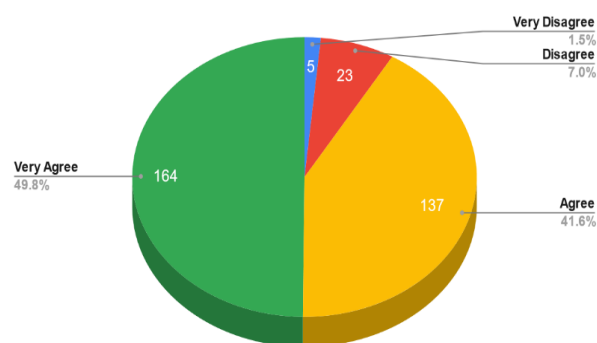
In terms of how accessible it is to get material on this site. Students are at ease and have no issues. This is proven by the fact that 49.8% of respondents strongly agree that materials on this website are easy to obtain. Only around 7% disagreed.

From the results of the aspect of English language skills, it can be seen that the use of English Discoveries in the blended learning process gives valuable experiences in students' learning. They can maximize the learning methods of English Discoveries, namely deepening the material, practicing and doing tests. Students can improve their English skills effectively and efficiently with the structured English learning method found on the English Discoveries platform. (Munadi, 2010)defines learning media as "anything that may transmit messages from sources in a planned manner to establish a positive learning environment in which the recipient can efficiently and effectively carry out the learning process."

The Aspect of the Advantages of Blended Learning

Every learning platform, including this English Discovery has benefits. This platform is meant to aid with the repetitive learning process. However, there are several limitations to use the English Discovery Platform in a blended setting. These restrictions are exposed through various statements in this questionnaire, the results of which are displayed in the pie chart below.
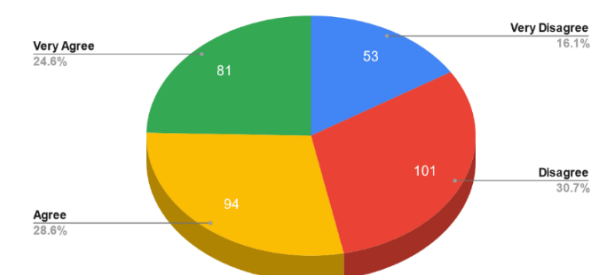
Chart 6
Blended learning is affected by media limitations.
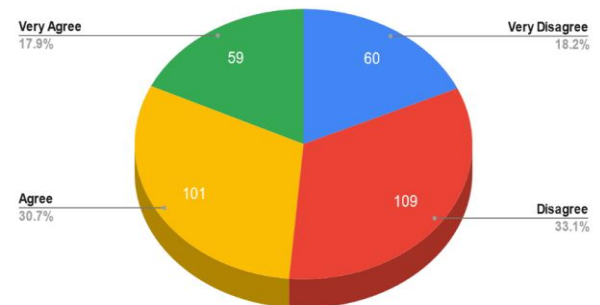
Blended learning using the English discovery platform requires the use of appropriate media and gadgets. Respondents' perceptions are fairly equally split, with 30.7 percent agreeing and 33.1 percent disagreeing. One component in the relevance of this learning activity is the device's optimal function.

Chart 7
**Blended learning is restricted by internet access networks that do not accommodate it.**

According to the chart above, students' perspectives on the problems of internet connectivity that make it difficult to access the Discovery Learning platform are fairly distributed. It can be noticed that 28.6 percent of students claimed that internet connectivity restrictions were experienced during the

activity. 30.7 percent of respondents, on the other hand, claimed that they had no difficulties with internet connectivity, implying that they were able to use this platform without trouble.

Chart 8
There are obstacles in terms of a lack of understanding of using technology.
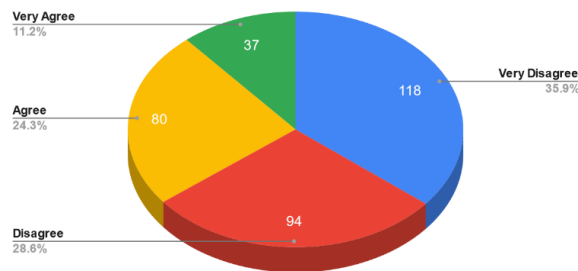
In terms of technological barriers, the chart above shows that 35.9% of respondents disagreed, indicating that students have a firm understanding of technology and do not find it difficult to access the English Discovery Learning website. However, this does not eliminate the possibility of issues, since 24.4 % said they still had difficulty comprehending technology.

Conclusion

This English Discovery Learning platform aims to make English learning in a blended learning environment easier and more enjoyable. Based on the findings and conversations, it appears that the utilization of this platform has a positive response in terms of convenience of use and accessibility. However, the findings are nearly equal in terms of obstacles to usage and access. As a result, students' challenges in accessing this platform must be recognized, and solutions explored, such as the engagement of teachers to constantly monitor and guarantee that all students are able to get the most out of this platform when studying English.

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