Students’ Perceptions on Learning Management Systems of Arabic Learning through Blended Learning Model

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Abstract: The emergence of various Learning Management System (LMS) applications support the implementation of Arabic learning with a blended learning model that combines traditional method (face to face) and online. The purpose of this study is to describe students’ perceptions as users of the LMS application. The study was descriptive research. As many as 150 students involved in this study, 75 percent chose the blended learning model for learning Arabic. They called the ten most popular LMS application platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Schoology, Geschool, Our Class, Kelase, ClassDojo, TrackCC, Class123, and Eckovation. Of the 10 LMS applications, the best is Edmodo and the most famous is the Google Classroom. The potential of the LMS application as a representation of the blended learning model is because it has a variety of features. There are at least 16 features, namely: integration of LMS applications with social media, communication features with parents, attendance, payment, homework, conferences, forums, certificates, quiz (polling), document shares, grade books, announcements, testing/surveys, calendar/schedule, email, and chat facilities. The results of students' perceptions regarding these features indicate that they understand all the functions of the LMS features. About learning Arabic, they assessed that all LMS applications had the potential to be used for learning Arabic. The most significant potential is the ability of the LMS application to help learn speaking, writing, and grammar (Sharaf and Nahwu) skills.

Introduction

The development of digital applications in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era is increasingly rapid. The number of internet users in Indonesia is also increasing.¹ This is an opportunity for developers to provide a variety of applications for learning, known as the Learning Management System (LMS). Various existing LMS applications, of course,

aim to improve the quality of education. These LMS applications also encourage the emergence of a learning model called blended learning or flipped classroom, which is learning that, combines conventional learning models (face to face) and electronics (e-learning).

The blended learning model is known to be useful for current learning because it has many advantages, including time efficiency, utilization of the latest technology, unlimited space and time. LMS application developers respond to these advantages by adding various features and facilities needed in learning, such as digital teaching materials, class formation, assignments, quizzes, tests, information sharing and references which can all be done online so that the learning process becomes faster, easier and cheaper. The blended learning model is also believed to apply to a variety of teaching materials, including learning Arabic. For Muslim communities in Indonesia, Arabic is not a second language, but it is a foreign language. However, they were enthusiastic about learning Arabic, which was considered as the language of religion, the language of global communication, and international language.

Seeing the relationship between developing diverse LMS applications, applying blended learning models and learning Arabic, it is necessary to know students' perceptions about using LMS applications to learn Arabic with blended learning models. This perception is needed to answer the assumptions that try to inhibit Arabic learning by utilizing LMS applications such as rejection of LMS applications to maintain conventional models. LMS features are considered incomplete and have not been able to

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accommodate all needs and learning processes, slow internet networks, lack of facilities, infrastructure and learning media.\(^7\)

According to Aldiab, Chowdhury, Kootsookos, Alam, and Allhibi, LMS is software that can automate the administration of learning.\(^8\) LMS application can combine conventional learning models and e-learning.\(^9\) This combination is needed because the concept of e-learning cannot be fully applied online so that blended learning appears. Khalil, Abdel Meguid, and Elkhider define blended learning as described as a mix of traditional face-to-face instruction and e-learning.\(^10\)

From the aspect of ownership authority, LMS applications are divided into two types; self-hosting and vendor-hosting. The LMS self-hosting application is a platform that can be designed and managed as needed. However, this platform requires the role of a reliable administrator in the field of IT, domain rental fees and hosting, localhost, and adequate infrastructure. Whereas vendor-hosting LMS is a platform owned by a third party, ready to use, available menus, cheaper, does not need qualified IT skills, without hosting and domain fees. Still, to use them, it is necessary to analyze needs first to fit the learning process, and objectives blended learning model that wants to be applied.\(^11\) Therefore, the results of this study are essential for institutions or teachers who want to choose the LMS platform.

The advantages of this LMS support the implementation of the blended learning model in Arabic learning. The blended learning model makes it easier for users to understand the theory and transfer theory into practice.\(^12\) The blended learning model


makes students better prepared for class lessons and improves performance in taking tests. In its implementation, blended learning does not require online method, but it must be combined with face-to-face methods so that education remains controlled.

Several studies on LMS have been widely studied by experts. Liu, Brantmeier, Wilcox, Griffin, Calcagno-Roach, and Brannon developed the LMS instrument that initially was validated with 243 response sets. Yuen, Cheng, and Chan investigated the relationship between changes to LMS use and belief, and satisfaction with LMS among 1179 students. Chaw and Tang explored the effectiveness of LMS in learning. Stockless inquired the factors that influence the acceptability of the LMS by secondary school teachers. Rhode, Richter, Gowen, Miller, & Wills identified various forms of LMS that are frequently used. De Smet, Valcke, Schellens, De Wever, & Vanderlinde

18 Jason Rhode Et Al., “Understanding Faculty Use Of The Learning Management System,” Online Learning 21, No. 3 (2017): 68–86.

conducted qualitative research to investigate the learning path in LMS. Lakhan and Kumar stated that m-learning activities can much better engage students in the learning process. Students at online universities have started to accept mobile technology as a new learning tool. Laisema developed collaborative blended learning activities to improve student collaboration skills. Although less than a quarter of respondents found blended learning useless, most held positive notions for blended learning practices. Di, El, Martin, and Gillois reported students’ rejection toward LMS that is used for initial training. Al-Sharhan, Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, and Al-Huwail revealed that many universities utilize LMS to improve pedagogy and to increase the quality of online learning. Our research differs from existing studies because we investigate Arabic university students' perceptions regarding the use of LMS with blended learning.

Based on our observation at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, more than 60% of respondents or users are pesantren graduate students whose experience in using gadgets and e-learning utilization is still minimal. The learning model in pesantren still uses an old pattern that even students are prohibited from using gadgets. As a consequence, Arabic education students are less familiar with LMS applications. The use of LMS applications for Arabic is still relatively new in the learning process, especially for Arabic education students. Whereas LMS applications are very diverse and varied. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the variations of LMS applications that are compatible with Arabic learning and students’ perceptions after experiencing a transition from conventional learning models to blended learning. This assumption results in LMS applications not being used massively in the Arabic

learning process so that the implementation of the blended learning model has not been maximized. By knowing the students' perceptions after they were directly involved in the use of the LMS application, the researchers hope that students’ achievement and motivation in learning Arabic with a blended learning model are increasing.

Method

This research is descriptive qualitative because it aims to determine students' perceptions about various LMS applications after they take Arabic learning that researchers apply to Arabic e-Learning courses and Arabic Learning Technology. Respondents or samples in this study are purposive because the perception they want to know is specifically aimed at students who are learning Arabic and are directly involved in the process of utilizing LMS applications.

The number of respondents was 150 students. They consisted of 120 students in Arabic Language Study Program Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 15 students in the Postgraduate Study Program (S2) of Arabic Language at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, and 15 students from Arabic Postgraduate Study Program (S2) at IAIN Kediri. These respondents took part in online classes in several classes using different LMS application platforms. Thus, the heterogeneous nature of students and the types of LMS applications that are also diverse is expected to produce objective perceptions about LMS applications that are applied to the blended learning model for learning Arabic.

The data search was carried out with interview, observation and questionnaire techniques which were distributed to students after they had attended one semester of lectures. The data are selected, tabulated and analyzed using qualitative content analysis and statistical calculations. Through a Likert scale, researchers hope to find out the level of students' perceptions of the LMS application, which is applied to Arabic learning and followed directly by the respondents.

Result and Discussion

Perception of Blended Learning

Based on the results of the questionnaire distributed to 150 respondents, it is known that 112 students (75%) chose the blended learning model; 34 respondents (23%)
chose the conventional learning model, and four respondents (3%) said they enjoyed learning online ultimately (fully online).

The respondents who chose the blended learning model reasoned that blended learning was a necessity. They claim that they use the internet and smartphones every day so that this technology must be used for learning Arabic. Students who choose the conventional model revealed that blended learning will not take place optimally in learning Arabic so that they still need a traditional method (face to face) between lecturers and students. Whereas students who choose full online stated that learning in the digital age should be fully online as an option for students who are busy and may not be present in classroom learning.

As shown in Figure 1, the data also shows that the majority of students (75%) rated blended learning as a useful learning model for learning Arabic for three reasons. First, the blended learning model implemented through the LMS application is assessed according to learning needs. Second, blended learning integrates conventional models and e-learning so that it is considered more complete. Third, the transformation from traditional to full online does not take place radically to minimize rejection of LMS applications and blended learning models. This is important because direct learning face to face is a culture that has become a tradition in Indonesia so that the LMS application is an effective medium of transformation from conventional to fully online.

**Perception about LMS Application**

Based on the results of the questionnaire about the name of the LMS application known to the respondents, there are known ten applications they mentioned, namely: Google Classroom, Edmodo, Schoology, Geschool, Our Class, Kelase, ClassDojo, TrackCC, Class123, Eckovation. Out of the 10 LMS application names mentioned by 150 respondents, researchers asked them to rate the best, most popular, most accessible...
and most appropriate LMS application for learning Arabic. Their answers are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Perception about LMS Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>LMS Application</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Most Popular</th>
<th>Easiest</th>
<th>Most Appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Google Classroom</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Edmodo</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Schoology</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geschool</td>
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<td>18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kelas Kita</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Kelase</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>ClassDojo</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>TrackCC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Class123</td>
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<td>Eckovation</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Number Of Respondents 150

Table 1 shows that of the 10 LMS applications mentioned by 150 respondents, the best is Edmodo (25%), the most popular is Google Classroom (30%), the easiest to use is Edmodo (15%), and the most appropriate for learning Arabic is Edmodo (21%). According to respondents, Edmodo is the best, most comfortable and most appropriate LMS application platform for learning Arabic while Google Classroom is rated as the most popular LMS application. Edmodo excellence over other LMS applications because from the beginning, Edmodo has been designed for education. This application consistently improves performance, features and facilities for learning. Nevertheless, Edmodo’s popularity is still inferior to Google Classroom.26 This is understandable because of Google’s support as the largest media company in the world. Google’s program, called Google for Education is proof that Google has begun to explore the world of education.27 This reality should be considered by competitors to continue to compete. If other platforms do not try to improve performance and create creativity, it is sure to be lost and abandoned by users.

Of the ten most popular LMS applications according to respondents, what's interesting is that there are three Indonesian LMS platforms, namely: Geschool, Our Class and Kelase. These three platforms are at the middle level and can compete with other platforms. The government and users in Indonesia should support the development of domestic product LMS platforms so that the growth of startups and LMS applications

is more rapid. Indeed, a large number of internet users in Indonesia is a potential factor for application developers. So, clear regulations and maximum support for Indonesian LMS applications are needed.

**Perception of LMS Application Features**

In utilizing the LMS application for learning Arabic, the first and foremost thing is the features or facilities provided by the LMS application. Do users know whether there are Arabic and Indonesian language facilities?

Figure 2 shows 92 people (61%) are aware of Arabic features and 110 people (73%) are aware of Indonesian language features in the LMS application features. According to the user, whether or not the Arabic or Indonesian settings are not a severe problem because the LMS application is still able to be a medium for the whole learning process, especially for communication between users, class management, data storage, and so on.

![Figure 2. Perception of LMS Application Features](image)

**Table 2. LMS Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>LMS Features</th>
<th>Google Classroom</th>
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<th>Schoology</th>
<th>Geeschool</th>
<th>Kelas Kita</th>
<th>Kelas</th>
<th>ClassDojo</th>
<th>TrackCC</th>
<th>Class123</th>
<th>Eckovation</th>
<th>Calendar / Schedule</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
<th>Chat Facilities</th>
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</table>
Table 2 mentions 16 features commonly found in LMS applications, namely: integration of LMS with Social Media, communication features with parents, attendance, payment, homework, conferences, forums, certificates, quizzes (polls), document sharing, books classes, announcements, testing/surveys, calendar/schedule, e-mail and chat facilities. Of these 16 features, according to the majority of users, almost all features already exist in the LMS application. They know this feature and claim to be able to operate it efficiently. They contended that LMS features were more than enough to help the Arabic learning process with a blended learning model.

**Perception of the Potential of LMS for Learning Arabic**

What are the potential applications of the LMS in accommodating Arabic learning, especially for learning four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and three language elements (sounds, words, sentences)?

![Figure 3. Perception about the Potential of LMS for Learning Arabic](image)

Note: (1) Very Potential; (2) Not Potential; (3) Sufficient Potential; (4) Potential; (5) Very Potential.

Figure 3 shows that the most potential that LMS applications have is for learning the skills of speaking (kalam) and reading (qira’ah). This means that the problem of learning speaking skills and the lack of literacy skills can be overcome by using LMS applications. According to the user, the LMS application contains audio-visuals that are needed to improve speaking skills. In addition, the use of hardware such as mobile phones that contain LMS applications also helps users practice reading skills because almost every time they claim to use mobile phones as learning media. This finding is in

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line with the result of the existing studies, which reported that LMS applications could help students to understand and enhance reading skills.28

Figure 3 also shows that the LMS application has great potential to help users learn Arabic grammar (Sharaf and Nahwu) which has been challenging to discover with conventional models due to the lack of teacher and student interaction. With the LMS application, communication between teacher and student can take place without being limited by space and time so that students have many opportunities to deepen Arabic elements.

Conclusion

LMS applications support the implementation of the blended learning model in Arabic learning. The assumptions that so far rejected the blended learning model because it was considered unable to replace the traditional model were incorrect because the features available in the LMS application helped the learning process. This is evidenced by the results of students' perceptions as users of the LMS application. As many as 112 out of 150 students (75%) chose blended learning because this model is now able to be realized through various LMS application platforms. Students stated that, of the 10 LMS applications, the most famous is Google Classroom, and the best is Edmodo. Students' perceptions about the features of LMS applications indicate that LMS applications help students to learn and develop their skills in speaking, writing, and grammar (Sharaf and Nahwu). For the next study, it is crucial to investigate the effectiveness of LMS application using blended learning to develop students’ higher-order thinking skills. Also, it is needed to examine the impact of blended learning on students’ motivation and achievement.

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