

ISLAMIC BANKING STUDENTS' NEEDS FOR EAP ONLINE LEARNING IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating Islamic Banking students' needs for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) online learning in Indonesia. This research method was a descriptive survey expecting to discover the target and learning needs linked to online learning. This study used a questionnaire distributed three distinctive times to 572 students of the Islamic Banking department at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) of Ponorogo from 2020 to 2021. The observation was also used to support the data. The results discovered students' preference on the platforms used to support online learning, whether it was a virtual tool to replace in-person teaching or the learning management system, the effective duration of virtual meetings, language used and learning activities. The reasons for students' preferences and some students' inputs to the EAP online learning were also revealed. The needs analysis research may provide a basis for innovative online EAP course design and help prepare and deliver EAP online learning.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, EAP, Online Learning, Islamic Banking

INTRODUCTION

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has grown immeasurably in the higher education sector around the world. One of the subjects studied is EAP needs analysis on account of the awareness that all tertiary level students possess different learning needs. For example, the students in Hong Kong prefer academic English language provision to general English (Evans & Green, 2007). In Iran, the EAP class's purpose is to plan the students to join and participate in international occasions conducted in English (Ranjbar & Hassan, 2021).

EAP students' need continuous exploration also extent online learning matters, which is now massively discussed due to coronavirus. At the beginning of 2020, EAP courses in higher education institutions stopped face-to-face learning. They moved to online learning under the educational policy to prevent the spread of the virus. Although in 2021, some higher education institutions allowed their students to have a class on the campus by following a strict protocol, others still

make the most of online learning as part of the hybrid learning system. This forced transition has many challenges, such as synchronous/asynchronous learning tool integration and student online competence (Turnbull et al., 2021) and the students' little determination to acquire English autonomously outside classroom due to lack of relevance of English class (Subekti, 2021).

From those challenges, EAP online learning relevant to the students' needs seems necessary to increase the students' interest in learning. Need analysis is very effective in evaluating the students' need for learning English (Yalden, 1987). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs set the purpose of English courses for tertiary level students. It is mastering the knowledge and steps to communicate orally and in writing using English to develop the academic and working world. The focus on learning English should be equal for both EAP and ESP. Though studies on these matters have been plentiful in the form of a journal article (e.g., Madkur, 2018) or an undergraduate thesis (e.g., Pertiwi, 2021), both of them primarily studies English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course.

Besides a scarce study focusing on the need analysis of EAP courses, there is scarce research aiming on the needs of online learning. The reasons might be that EAP courses do not employ online learning much before the covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the stakeholders of the EAP course who are forced to swiftly adapt to the emergency remote teaching (ERT), in this case, the teachers and information and communication technologies (ICT) administrators, entail doing a need analysis by themselves or referring to works of literature. However, the previous studies have not detailed a practical EAP online learning course, such as how long a virtual meeting and learning activities are practical.

A study exploring students' needs during covid-19 with an aim of an effective English online learning has been done in five departments of third-semester students of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis, Indonesia (Destianingsih & Satria, 2020). This study does not state expectedly that the course is EAP and from which sample departments. Considering each department has specific needs, a need analysis of a definite department, e.g., the Islamic Banking Department, is necessary to address the above challenges. Researching for students in a department for altered times or classes can also bring new insight into how the students' needs may change.

This article reports on a study investigating Islamic Banking students' needs for EAP online learning at IAIN Ponorogo in Indonesia. It specifically explores the target needs, what students need to do in the objective situation, and the learning needs, what they need to learn (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This study is projected to be expedient for EAP teachers to prepare an online class that fits Islamic Banking students' needs in Indonesia and similar contexts.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study was a quantitative study with a survey approach. The study's general objective was to determine Islamic Banking students' needs for effective EAP online teaching and learning. A descriptive study was designed to achieve this goal. Since needs analysis can be conducted in several different ways, either inductive (case studies, observations) or deductive (questionnaires, surveys) (Berwick, 1989), this study employed not only questionnaires but also observation to support the data. The questionnaires consist of two parts: target needs (necessities, lacks, and wants) and learning needs (input, activities, setting, learners', and teacher's role). The questionnaires were distributed via Google Form.

This research was conducted at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) of Ponorogo, Indonesia, from 2020 to 2021. The total participants of this study were 572 first-year students. The data were collected from the three-time distribution of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was distributed to 189 first-semester students in August 2020. The second questionnaire was distributed to 154 second-semester students in January 2021 after they finished their EAP class, the English I course, and took another EAP class, the English II course. The first- and second-time distribution questionnaires were to discover the consistency of their answers.

Meanwhile, the third questionnaire was distributed to 229 first-semester students in August 2021. The last questionnaire distributed was to determine whether the students' needs may change over time. All the questionnaires used Bahasa to ease the students in answering the questions.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data, particularly to describe the distribution of students' needs for EAP online learning. The presentation of data was mainly from the last questionnaire. The reason is that the last questionnaire had the most participants than the two previous ones. Moreover, the participants in the

last questionnaire had more online learning experience than the previous participants who experienced ERL in a moderately short time. Then, the input is hoped to be profound. However, the two previous ones were used to validate the findings.

This study considered two main ethical issues to protect participants' rights: the readiness of participants to volunteer themselves to take part in the study and the participants' privacy. Before collecting the data, the research was explained thoroughly to the participants to get their consent. Participants who did not want to partake in the study were allowed to skip the questionnaire. This study stimulated self-selection to ensure that the participants took part voluntarily. As for the second consideration, the participants were also informed that the data would be kept confidential. They did not need to mention their name and could withdraw from the study at any point—this undertaking aimed at gaining their trust.

RESULTS

In Indonesia, English in Higher Education Institution (HEI) has been organised differently across institutions and even departments as a compulsory subject. The Ministry of Religious Affairs set the purpose of the English course to master the knowledge and phases to communicate both orally and in writing using English in the development of the academic and working world. To attain this goal, Islamic Banking Department at IAIN Ponorogo has three English courses: English I, English II, and Business English. English I and English II are EAP courses taken by first-year students, and each of them consists of 14 meetings.

The following are the results of students' need analysis of online learning. The students' needs for effective EAP online learning consist of six aspects. They are (1) language skills taught, (2) platforms to replace face-to-face classrooms, (3) duration of virtual meetings, (4) LMS, (5) learning activities, and (6) languages used during EAP online learning. The data of each aspect will be presented and discussed accordingly.

Students' Need for Language Skills in EAP Online Learning

As for the first aspect, five options (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and all skills delivered equally) were given. An empty option was also provided to

allow the students to give their opinion. It was found that five students gave additional answers to this question.

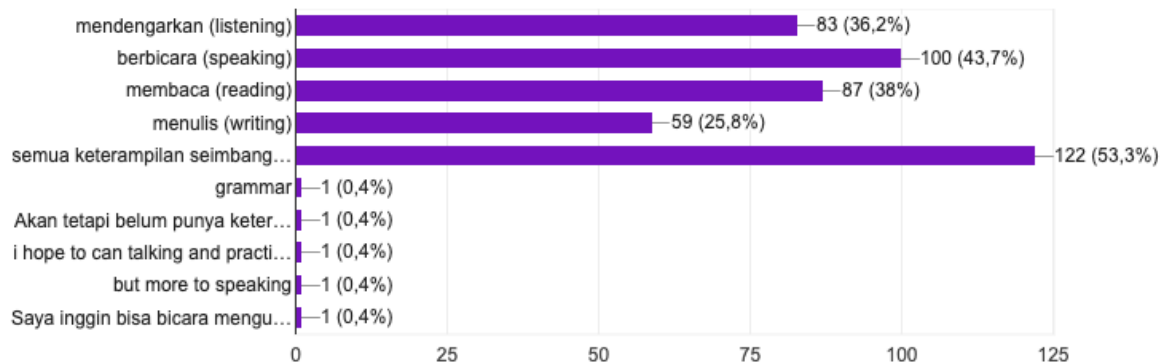


Figure 1. Result of Students' Need for Language Skills in EAP Online Learning

From Figure 1, the result indicates that more than half of students (53.3%) preferred to have all skills taught equally. Of four skills taught exclusively in EAP online class, speaking ranked first (43.7 %), followed by reading (38%) and listening (36.2%) with just a slight difference. The last skills rank was writing, with just about a quarter of the total participant. Each additional answer was given by a student (0.4%), but three of five answers chose speaking skills. The other two answers are grammar and the student's input on how they do not have any skill set. In conclusion, all skills need to be included in EAP online learning, focusing more on speaking.

Students' Need for Platform for Virtual Meetings

The second aspect is the learning platform the students prefer to replace face-to-face meetings. From Figure 2, the students preferred Google Meet (72.9%) over Zoom (37.6%). The third rank was WhatsApp Video Call (3.9%), with nine students choosing this. The other answers were Microsoft Teams (0.8%) and WhatsApp Group (0.4%). Google Meet becoming the first rank was confirmed by the first questionnaire (50.8%) and the second one (68.8%). The additional platforms selected by students from the two previous questionnaires were Jitsi Meet (24.7%), WhatsApp Video Call (14.3%), and Skype (1.1%).

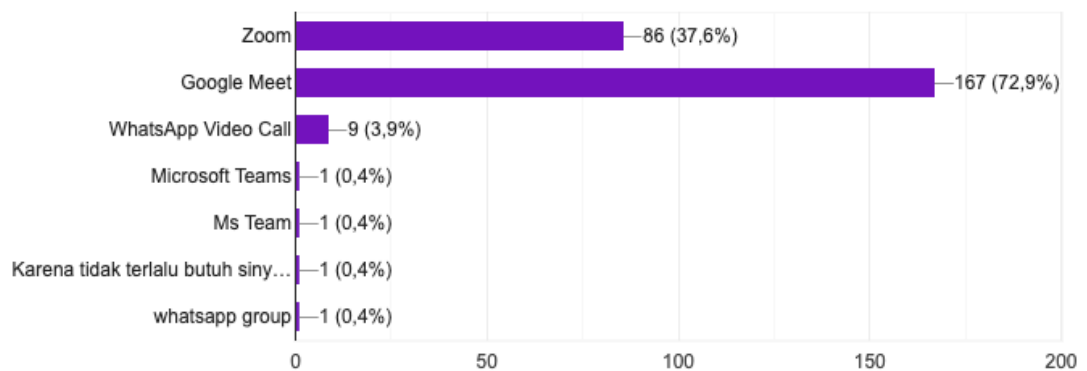


Figure 2. Result of Students' Need for Platform of Virtual Meetings

In the second last answer in Figure 2, a student might mistakenly answer "because it does not need a strong signal" to support their choice. Though it is not clear which platform this student refers to, Google Meet is feasibly the platform to be accessed with a low signal. A claim on how students preferred Google Meet because it can be accessed without a strong signal was proven from the observation during the virtual meeting and the input from students in another question's answer (Figure 3). From the observation, when the students and the teacher failed to access the Zoom meeting due to a low signal, they could join the Google Meet class. However, during the Google Meet meeting, about three students still found difficulty joining the class as they reported it to the teacher via personal WhatsApp message. The observation result is supported by the input from the student who said that "I think it will be easier to use Google Meet because using Zoom needs a strong signal." Another student also mentioned that their signal is terrible to have Zoom meetings.

Students' Need about Duration of Virtual Meeting

With virtual meetings replacing face-to-face meetings, the third aspect is how often the online synchronous video conference lesson is in a semester and how long it takes. Each HEI has a different policy on the total meetings in a semester. EAP course in IAIN Ponorogo consists of 14 meetings which take 100 minutes for each meeting in a week. This research found that most students preferred to have a virtual meeting every week (41.9%). The second preferred choice was two meetings in a semester (34.1%). Meanwhile, rank three was only a virtual meeting in a

semester (19.2%). The other responses were not every meeting. If this week is a Zoom meeting, then next week is not (1.6%), based on the materials given (0.8%), no virtual meeting (0.4%), five times or more if the materials are complicated and need more explanation (0.4%), three meetings (0.4%), half of the general meetings (0.4%), and whenever if needed (0.4%).

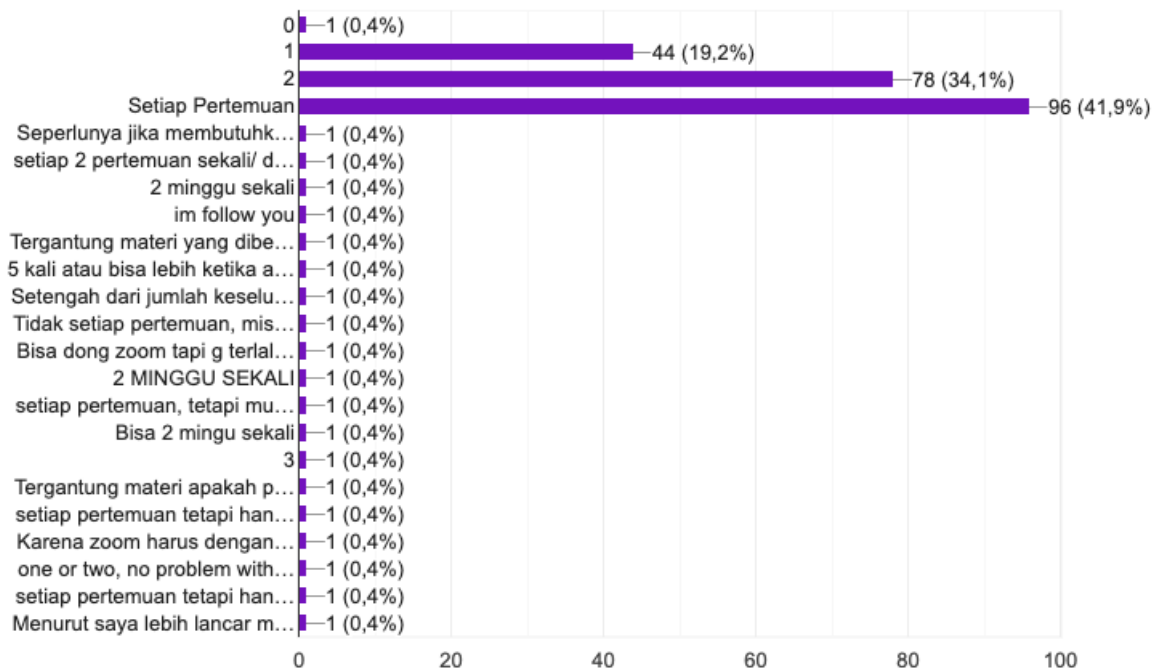


Figure 3. Result of Students' Need about Duration of Virtual Meeting in a Semester

The third questionnaire in Figure 3 was different from the first and second questionnaires in which the students wished only to have two video conference meetings (44.4% and 55.2%). There was an increase in the percentage by 10.8%, but the number of voters was only one difference (84 and 85). Here, the choice to have synchronous video conference lessons every week was always on the third rank (18% and 13.6%), precisely under only one meeting (39.2% and 21.4%). From students' input, many students suggested that the virtual meeting would be better to be held before the exams to review materials and discuss complex materials. The students were selected to have two video conference meetings in meeting seven and fourteen.

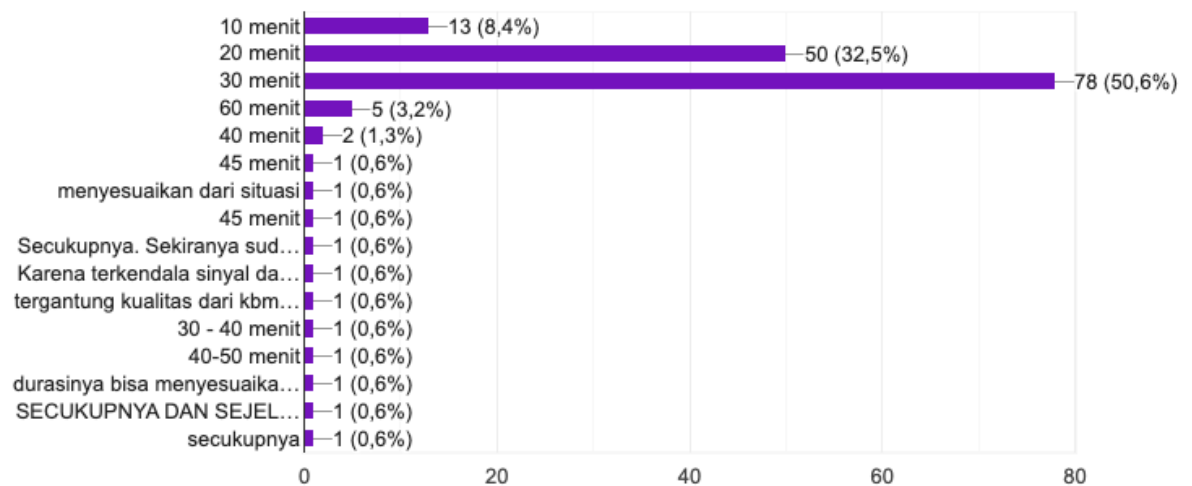


Figure 4. Result of Students' Need about Duration of Video Conference Lesson

The necessary duration of synchronous video conference meetings is shown in Figure 4. More than half of the students (50.6%) voted to have a video conference lesson for 30 minutes. It means only about a third of the total duration. The second and third rank was 20 minutes (32.5%) and 10 minutes (8.4%). The others were 60 minutes (3.2%), 40 minutes (1.3%), 45 minutes (0.6%). The students gave inputs on how poor signal and limited internet package affected this duration. They suggested having a virtual meeting sufficiently and clearly (1.8%). This result verifies the desirable duration of synchronous sessions uncovered in the forgoing study (Perveen, 2016). Thirty minutes are undeniably sufficient.

Students' Need for Learning Management System

The fourth aspect is about the learning management system preferred by the students. As depicted in Figure 5, from three options among e-learning, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp Groups, rank one is WhatsApp Group, with more than half of students voting for it (56.8%). Ranks two and three were e-learning (38.9%) and Google Classroom (34.5%). A similar order of ranking was found in the first questionnaire results. WhatsApp Group also got more than half of the students' support (58.2%), while e-learning and Google Classroom obtained 30.2% and 28%, respectively.

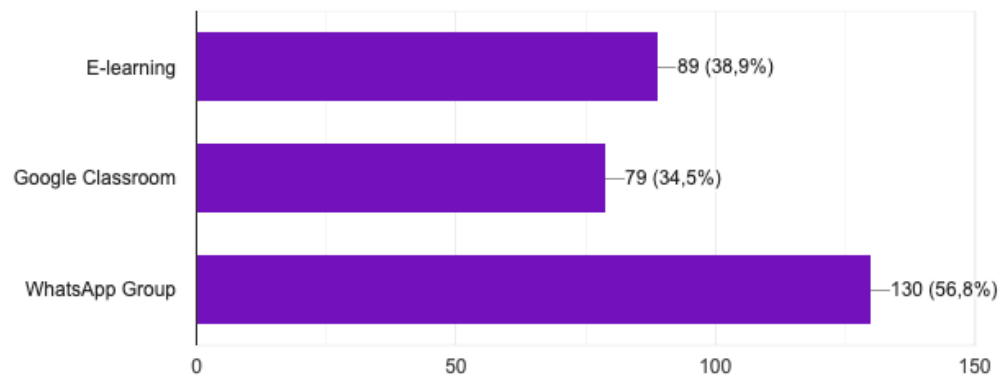


Figure 5. Result of Students' Need for Learning Management System

Students' Need for Learning Activity in EAP Online Learning

The fifth aspect is the teaching method. From Figure 6, most students preferred to listen to the teacher's explanation (91.3%). The learning project was in the second rank (22.7%). The assignment was in the third rank (14%). The presentation by the students was the fourth rank (7.4%). Meanwhile, the other three answers are all four-teaching methods used (0.4%), speaking practice (0.4%), and discussion (0.4%). It is interesting to see speaking practice and discussion brought by the students as they emphasise their interest in speaking skills. However, seeing lecturing got the highest score shows that the students need the lecture's explanation as mentioned in their reasons.

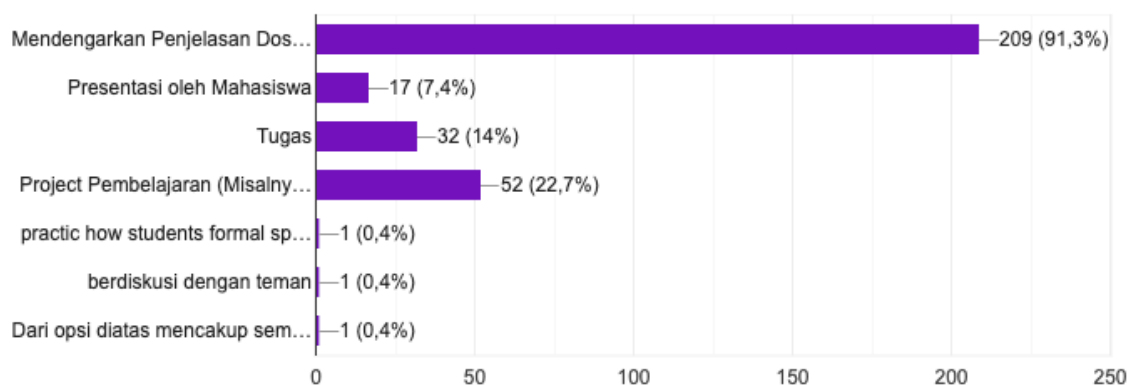


Figure 6. Result of Students' Need for Learning Activity

There are some reasons why the students favoured listening to the teacher's explanation. The first reason is to make the materials clearer and easier to

understand than reading the materials given themselves. Listening to the teacher's explanation via Zoom or Google Meet also allows the students to ask if materials have not been understood. The students seem to anticipate the difficulty of the materials and conditions where they may be confused. This method is perceived to be exciting and refreshing, given that the video conference contains sound effects and high visualisation.

Students' Need for Language Used during EAP Online Learning

The last aspect is the language used in the teaching and learning process. Figure 8 shows that more than three-quarters of students (75.5%) preferred to use English and Bahasa during EAP online learning. More than a quarter of students (27.5%) preferred to use English, Bahasa, and the local language, more likely Javanese, during the class. During the class, those who selected only a language used, whether Bahasa or English, were 8.7% and 2.2.% of the students, respectively. The other answers proposed by the students were 75% Bahasa: 25% English (0.9%), 70% English: 30% Bahasa, multi-language with the dominance of Bahasa or local language to make it easier to understand (0.4%), and lastly, the dominance on Bahasa because if only English spoken the student does not know the meaning (0.4%).

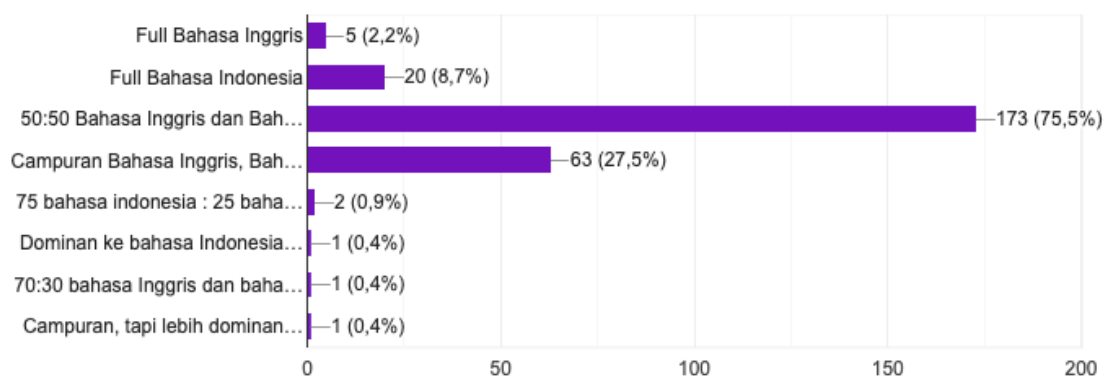


Figure 7. Result of Students' Need for Language during EAP Online Learning

The reasons behind each answer are various. The students preferred to use both English and Bahasa because they were still learning English. They chose this option to avoid miscommunication because Bahasa would be used reasonably. The

other students also support this by saying that the students may find difficulty understanding the materials by using English exclusively. The students believed that using Bahasa would also help communicate with the teacher or friends from a different area. Meanwhile, those who chose English supposed that they would be more fluent in speaking English.

DISCUSSION

The analysis results in target needs discovered that most students desired to have synchronous video conference meetings every week via Google Meet as a replacement for face-to-face meetings for 30 minutes. The students' preference on duration of the virtual meeting in a semester differs by their view whether they can learn English better asynchronously or synchronously. Despite synchronous learning's popularity because of the better access of the technological developments and Internet (Chen et al., 2005), students are more active in asynchronous mode (Perveen, 2016). It is also believed that asynchronous lessons can improve students' reading and writing skills, while synchronous ones can develop their listening and speaking (Wang & Chen, 2009). The finding of this study, then, indicates that the desirable mode of EAP online learning does not differ across time, but different groups of students may have distinctive desirable modes.

The result of students' need analysis about the video conferencing platform contradicts the previous research (Destianingsih & Satria, 2020), which discovered that most students aspired to have effective online teaching through Zoom. Another study also found that the Zoom application is the easiest of other media, including Google Meet (Fuady et al., 2021). Though Zoom is easy to use, the students struggling with signals need Google Meet more since they can easily access it even with low signals. Zoom might be favoured in different research settings with stronger signals for most students (if not all) because of its easiness. The differences in research results mean that students in different contexts have different prerequisites. Hence, a needs analysis for a different class is essential.

In addition to those meetings, e-learning could be used as a learning management system supported by WhatsApp Group. More importantly, the e-learning of IAIN Ponorogo can also be used on a mobile device. Using LMS on a

mobile device is part of a new learning environment that facilitates learning (Cavus, 2011).

The EAP online learning was also expected to allow speaking Bahasa and Java to optimise learning. This finding supports Bahasa as a medium in language teaching to facilitate students' understanding and maximise their engagement in the classroom, particularly for students whose background language is not English (Rerung, 2018). Although the students in this study preferred to become bilingual Bahasa-English speakers more than multilingual Java-Bahasa-English speakers, Bensoussan et al. (2006) discovered that bilingual students used less sociolinguistic communicative factors than multilingual students. Sociolinguistics factors directly influence a student's English language proficiency (Melvina, 2015). Therefore, teachers should be aware of contextual factors to achieve effective EAP online learning.

About the learning needs, the most preferred activity to support students' learning was listening to the teacher's explanation over doing a learning project, engaging in an assignment, and having a presentation and discussion. The students perceived teacher-centred classes as necessary in EAP online learning, especially with their low English language proficiency (Eslami, 2010). This outcome is in line with a research investigating students of three universities in Malaysia in which most students preferred a teacher-centred approach to learning (Siew Ming & Alias, 2007). They view teachers as the resource and feeder to point out and correct the students' mistakes. English language proficiency and socio-cultural factors may also influence the students' needs since both countries have comparable sorts.

The teacher should consider the need of students who adhere to teacher-centred teaching practices when deciding on learning activities. However, besides pedagogical belief, the teachers also reference their previous experiences with technology (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010) to decide. Constructively, swapping between student- and teacher-centred teaching practices might be the best option (Hsu, 2016). However, there are many considerations in designing effective EAP online learning. The students' needs should be considered to increase their interest in learning to achieve their highest potential.

The teaching and learning activities were projected to develop all four language skills, with speaking skills as a priority. The result on skill priority is in

line with previous research (Fitriyah, 2018), in which 50% of the students chose to speak to be included in the English materials for Islamic Education students IAIN Kediri. It is also relevant to research on ESP course in Islamic Banking Department at IAIN Metro (Madkur, 2018), in which the students need speaking most. Moreover, the finding supports the learning objective set by the ministry, Ministry of Religious Affairs. The purpose is to master the knowledge and steps to communicate orally and in writing using English to develop the academic and working world. All skills need to be provided in EAP online learning by considering more speaking skills to attract students' interest in learning.

The teacher's role expected by the students was to give materials clearly to the students by using English and Bahasa to make them easier to understand. However, lecturing as a teaching method contradicts giving communicative tasks, which is recommended to facilitate the online speaking lessons (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). More importantly, it is essential to emphasise speaking practice because it significantly improves the students' language fluency, confidence, and experience (Styfanyshyn & Kalymon, 2021).

CONCLUSION

An appropriate learning environment is a must to make the students engage in EAP online learning. The teachers should know their students' needs to achieve successful and meaningful language learning. The students' conditions, such as low signal to access virtual meetings and how long the meeting takes, should be considered in designing the course. What language to use during the class students prefer will determine the successful communication and knowledge transfer informed by the students' language proficiency. This research finding on the target and learning needs of the students could be referenced for the teacher in preparing EAP online learning.

There are further directions for future research. First, future research may examine the needs of EAP online learning for students from the other departments. Such studies can further advance an understanding of the students' needs for different circumstances. A deeper investigation of each aspect of this study would also be beneficial to develop knowledge, for example, a study of multilingualism in EAP courses. Assessing EAP learners' and teachers' beliefs about EAP online

learning, which may serve as a consideration in designing an EAP curriculum, is also intriguing to be studied. Lastly, as HEI starts to have in-person teaching, it is time to explore the blend of online language and face-to-face teaching and learning environments for EAP courses.

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