

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter specifically explains several points such as background, research questions, research purposes, research significances, conceptual framework, and previous study.

A. Background of Study

In the age of Industrial Revolution 4.0, the teaching of English has advanced by integrating technology and novel approaches to improve the learning experience. Teachers are now obligated to include digital skills and provide captivating learning environments, such as educational games, to meet the requirements of students in the current digital era. In addition, EFL lecturers are highlighting the significance of maintaining proficiency in digital and technological skills to meet the requirements of the 4.0 era. They are advocating for interdisciplinary approaches and the practical development of skills in the curriculum. In addition, instructing English within the framework of the 4.0 era in Indonesia necessitates adjusting to technological progress and inventive educational approaches. Indonesian teachers are required to improve their professional competencies, which include mastery of language skills and understanding of modern learning theories. Education 4.0 and similar initiatives strive to enhance the educational experience by incorporating technology into classroom practices. This necessitates that teachers receive training to comprehend and successfully execute these modifications (Wanda et al., 2022).

Besides, the cultural dimensions affecting online learning in the 4.0 era present challenges in teaching. To address these obstacles and improve classroom interactions, strategies such as flipped learning activities are necessary. Ultimately, these approaches aim to prepare students for the demands of the 4.0 industry era (Mulyanto et al., 2022). In Indonesia, teacher

professional development should be in line with the demands of the 4.0 era. This means focusing on fostering creativity, critical thinking, and digital capabilities among teachers. The goal is to ensure that students acquire the essential skills needed for the future.

Furthermore, the swift progress in technology underscores the need for English teachers to provide students with contemporary literacies and communication abilities to effectively traverse the digital world (Darmajanti, 2020). Moreover, the disparity in culture between students' mother tongue and English presents a substantial barrier to the acquisition of practical communication skills, underscoring the need for measures that prioritize intercultural communicative ability to enhance language proficiency. To tackle these issues, a comprehensive strategy is needed that combines inventive pedagogical techniques, digital resources, and cultural sensitivity to adequately equip students for the requirements of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Blended learning, which integrates both online and face-to-face components, is being recognized as a viable approach to improve student engagement in educational environments (Lukas et al., 2022). Studies show that blended learning models have a good effect on student engagement by considering both subjective and objective elements related to students, teachers, and the external environment. Research assessing student performance and engagement in blended engineering courses demonstrates a rise in student views and posts on online platforms, indicating heightened levels of active participation and engagement. Moreover, the incorporation of technology in blended learning can augment student involvement by maintaining the learning experience sociable, genuine, and beneficial to the learning process, ultimately resulting in enhanced learning achievements and student drive. Blended learning is often beneficial in enhancing student engagement and enhancing educational experiences.

Based on the limited observation conducted at SMPN 3 Bojong, several key issues were identified regarding teaching English reading skills. First, difficulty in choosing learning strategies. Teachers need help selecting

appropriate learning strategies for teaching reading. There may be a lack of familiarity or training in effective pedagogical methods specifically tailored for teaching English reading. Second, challenges with using modern media and methods. Teachers noted needing help effectively utilizing modern media and methods that align with students' preferences and learning styles. It includes digital tools and interactive methods to enhance student engagement and motivation potentially. Third, teaching based on students' English proficiency. Another significant finding was the challenge of teaching reading based on students' varying levels of English proficiency. It indicates a need for differentiated instruction that caters to students' individual learning needs and language abilities. Fourth, motivation and engagement. The observation hinted at potential issues regarding student motivation and engagement in English reading. It could be linked to the mismatch between instructional methods and students' interests, as well as the effectiveness of current teaching approaches. Then, research focuses on blended learning. Given these observations, the researcher proposes to investigate the effectiveness of blended learning in addressing these challenges. Blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online digital resources and activities. The study explores how blending these approaches can enhance student engagement and motivation and improve English reading skills. Last, expected research outcomes. The anticipated outcomes of the proposed research include insights into teachers' experiences with blended learning methods for teaching reading and the corresponding responses from students. It will provide valuable data on the feasibility and effectiveness of integrating technology-enhanced strategies into the English reading curriculum. In summary, the limited observation at SMPN 3 Bojong highlights several areas of concern regarding current practices in teaching English reading skills. These findings underscore the need for exploring innovative approaches, such as blended learning, to address these challenges and potentially improve educational outcomes for students.

A group of researchers in Indonesia investigated blended learning. Siti Juhairiyah et al. (2022) quantitatively studied that aimed to determine students' perception of the use of blended learning. The result of this study is that most students positively responded to the use of blended learning in teaching English from the aspect of the effectiveness of blended learning itself. Firmansyah et al. (2022) are the second researchers who examined the study that aimed 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 showed that English Discoveries was an easy-to-use platform that aided and delivered a learning experience for students participating in blended learning activities. The third researcher, Sri et al. (2023), conducted a study to identify students' satisfaction with online learning and their expectations of blended learning in the post-pandemic era in a senior high public school in North Bali, Indonesia. The results showed that students feel satisfied with blended learning, and students expressed their expectations for direct interaction with teachers and classmates and had expectations for teaching methods, ease of materials, direct communication with teachers, interaction with classmates, technology use, and variety in learning resources.

Unfortunately, prior research is scarce on blended learning and teacher's views of blended learning in junior high school. Most of the past research on teacher's perspectives on English blended learning focuses primarily on university students. Then, there is still a lack of research that discusses student engagement in blended learning, especially in teaching reading. This research aimed to ascertain the teacher's experience of engaging students in teaching English reading using blended learning. The study was conducted at a junior high school.

B. Research Questions

From the background above, the research intended to acknowledge two research questions stated below:

1. What is the teacher's experience of engaging students in teaching reading using blended learning?
2. What are students' responses toward blended learning in English reading skills?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, the research aimed to achieve these two purposes:

1. To elaborate on the teacher's experience of engaging students in teaching reading using blended learning
2. To find out students' responses toward blended learning in English reading skills

D. Research Significances

The research is broadly classified into two research significances. These are practical and theoretical. Theoretically, this study's findings aim to contribute to the growing body of literature on blended learning by providing empirical insights into its implementation and effectiveness in enhancing English reading skills within a specific cultural and educational context. Moreover, the result of this research is expected to be used as a reference for teaching English. Practically, this research gives significance to students for engaging them in the learning process, teachers for fixing problems in using the appropriate media for teaching EFL, and researchers for conducting further research. By exploring teacher's experiences and student responses, the research informs educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers about the potential benefits and challenges of integrating blended learning approaches into language education practices at the secondary school level.

E. The Scope of The Study

This research explores the implementation and impact of blended learning in teaching English reading skills at SMPN 3 Bojong, an Indonesian secondary school. The study aims to investigate two primary research questions:

1. **Teacher's Experience with Blended Learning:** The study seeks to understand how English teachers at SMPN 3 Bojong perceive and experience engaging students in reading instruction using blended learning methods. This includes examining teachers' strategies, perceptions of student engagement and learning outcomes, and any challenges in implementing blended learning for teaching reading.
2. **Student Response to Blended Learning:** The research explores students' responses to blended learning approaches in improving their English reading skills. It involves investigating students' attitudes towards blended learning, their experiences with different instructional methods (online and traditional classroom settings), and their perceived effectiveness in enhancing their reading comprehension and proficiency.

Methodology: The study utilizes a qualitative research approach, specifically employing a case study design. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews with English teachers and administering questionnaires to 23 students from SMPN 3 Bojong. Qualitative analysis techniques such as thematic analysis will be applied to examine and interpret the data, focusing on identifying patterns, themes, and variations in teacher and student perspectives on blended learning in reading instruction.

Limitations: This study is limited by its focus on a single school, SMPN 3 Bojong, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other educational contexts. Additionally, the perspectives gathered from one English teacher and a small group of students may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and opinions regarding blended learning in reading instruction.

This scope of study outlines the specific objectives, methodology, potential limitations, and significance of the research, providing a clear framework for

conducting and interpreting the study's findings on blended learning in teaching English reading skills at SMPN 3 Bojong.

F. Conceptual Framework

This section examines the interconnected concepts synthesized from a theoretical framework. To establish an efficacious classroom, educators must adeptly implement the principles of classroom management. Harry Wong et al. (2012) posited that classroom management pertains to teachers' actions to structure students, space, time, and resources to facilitate student learning. From this perspective, classroom management proficiency embodies the teacher's capacity to cultivate social-emotional learning and a conducive learning environment. Furthermore, instructors are tasked not only with disseminating course material but also with nurturing their students. They must possess a deep understanding of classroom management and apply it effectively to attain educational objectives.

Language learners ought to embrace learning strategies to enhance their language acquisition skills. Moreover, language learners habitually adopt language learning strategies to facilitate language learning processes encompassing information reception, retention, and retrieval Hardan (2013). In essence, language learning strategies denote the methodologies employed by learners in acquiring a second language, aiding in their linguistic development. Additionally, these strategies play a pivotal role in augmenting students' language proficiency and ability to engage in verbal interactions effectively.

According to Archee (2015), using diverse teaching models like blended learning can enhance educators' pedagogical practices and enrich students' educational experiences. Blended learning involves amalgamating learning programs delivered through multiple modalities to achieve a shared educational objective. This instructional approach combines traditional face-to-face teaching with online learning, enabling students to access educational materials and complete tasks using digital tools. The primary aim is to offer students a customizable and adaptable learning environment that amalgamates the

strengths of both methodologies. Consequently, blended learning provides a tailored and versatile method to captivate and inspire students, fostering their academic triumph.

According to Bond (2020), student engagement in the learning process entails active and proactive participation in educational endeavors, manifested through behavioral, cognitive, and emotional actions. Student engagement, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, is deduced that it significantly impacts students' academic performance. This form of engagement is characterized by interactions, responses, inquiries, task completion, and active involvement in learning activities, culminating in favorable learning outcomes.

The researcher delineates the research framework in the subsequent schematic representation:

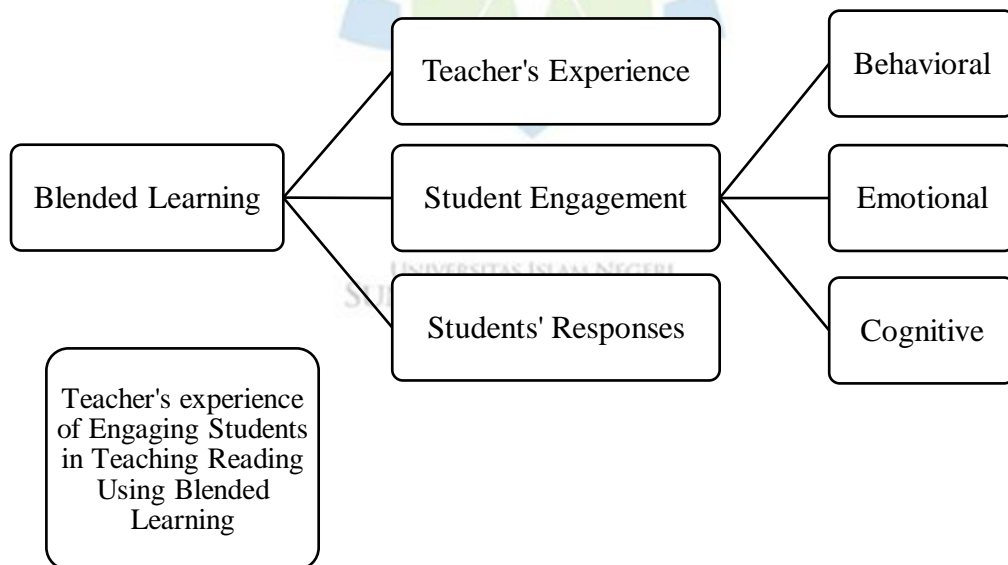


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Study

In this previous study, some researchers examined how blended learning is used in the field of education. Multiple researchers have

undertaken studies on blended learning. A brief description of the research is listed below.

First, Frederick et al. (2023) conducted a study to evaluate student perspectives on blended and online learning. The findings revealed that blended learning enhanced comprehension of course content, heightened learner motivation, allowed for greater flexibility in completing coursework, and was a more enjoyable method of instruction compared to traditional, lecture-based teaching. This prior research is similar to this study on the perception of blended learning. However, this research differs from previous research because it focuses on teacher perceptions on blended learning.

Second, Maniruzzaman (2022) conducted a study investigating EFL students' and teachers' perceptions and reactions towards blended learning in the Department of English at Jahangirnagar University. The results indicated that most students and teachers held predominantly positive views on blended learning despite students needing more exposure and professionals needing a deeper understanding of it. Previous research has similarities with this research in teacher perceptions of blended learning. What differentiates this research from previous research is that this research focuses on teachers' perceptions of blended learning in teaching reading. Then the previous research focused on the university level while this research is on the junior high school level.

Then, Dr. Shafia Baber et al. (2023) conducted another research. The study emphasized the difficulties associated with implementing blended learning in public schools. The findings reveal various concerns, such as inadequate funding and the need for the government to prioritize technical resources. This research is like previous research in implementing blended learning in state schools. What differentiates this research from previous research is that this research focuses on teachers' perceptions of student engagement in teaching reading.

Last, Freij (2022) studied the satisfaction of blended learning. The study was carried out in the context of higher education. The study revealed

a significant level of satisfaction with implementing blended learning. Nevertheless, there needed to be more satisfaction with participation and engagement. Furthermore, educators must actively engage in a program that enhances their proficiency in creating practical digital tools. This research is the same as previous research on satisfaction and interest in blended learning. Meanwhile, what differs from the research is that this research focuses on student engagement in blended learning in teaching reading.

