EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GOOGLE CLASSROOM IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study is aimed at investigating EFL students' perceptions on the use of Google Classroom for English language learning in a junior high school. The study used a mixed method design, combining quantitative and qualitative data. The context of the study was EFL students from one of state junior high schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. Through a survey of 146 students and some selected students for interviews, the study examines various aspects of their experiences with the platform, including motivation, effectiveness, communication, and access to learning materials. The findings reveal a positive attitude among EFL students towards Google Classroom, with their acknowledging its benefits in enhancing motivation, facilitating interaction, and providing convenient access to resources. The study highlights the potential of digital tools like Google Classroom to address challenges in language education. Thus, this study suggests implications for English teachers seeking to optimize technology-enhanced learning environments, mainly in English learning in junior high schools.

Keywords: *EFL students, Google Classroom, Language Learning, Online Education, Perceptions*.

INTRODUCTION

The way technology has been implemented in education has changed the dynamics of traditional classrooms in recent years. Google Classroom is one such platform that has grown in popularity (Ansong-Gyimah, 2020). Understanding the effects of digital tools such as Google Classroom becomes essential as teachers and students adjust to online learning environments (Abd. Syakur et al., 2020). Comparing to other learning management systems (LMS), Google Classroom is believed to be easier to use, helpful, and worth using for students (Kassim, 2024).

In the context of its benefits for teachers and students, Google Classroom offers a robust set of features, making it an ideal tool for students and one of the best platforms for enhancing teacher workflow. It can improve class dynamics, increase student participation, and enhance learning outcomes. By streamlining assignments, promoting paperless learning, fostering effective communication, and enhancing collaboration, Google Classroom makes teaching more meaningful and productive (Abazi-Bexheti et al., 2018). Additionally, teachers can create classes for specific subjects and include co-teachers, providing students with a

broader range of ideas and support online (Jumadi et al., 2021). Moreover, Google Classroom facilitates task submission, material sharing, and project collaboration among students. It also provides opportunities for discussion, thereby streamlining academic activities even when face-to-face meetings are not possible (Taman et al., 2021).

In educational research, pedagogy and language assessment have always been significant concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the adoption of digital tools for teaching and assessment by forcing a shift to online instruction. As one of LMSs, Google Classroom provides tools like collaborative areas, communication channels, and assignment submission. Its ability to facilitate language learning, however, is still up for debate. Suramto and Gustiana (2023) stated that Google Classroom offers several advantages, foremost among them being its ease of use and compatibility with all devices.

Implementing Google Classroom facilitates the evaluation of both in-class and out-of-class teaching and learning processes. This platform supports Blended Learning, combining traditional methods with e-learning. Designed by Google, it helps lecturers and students organize classes and communicate without being restricted by class schedules. Additionally, teachers can assign tasks and provide immediate feedback and grades to students, enhancing the overall learning experience (Ali & Maksum, 2020).

This current study focuses on junior high school EFL students utilizing Google Classroom to improve their knowledge of English. Thus, our main goal is to assess how Google Classroom affects the language learning experiences of EFL students. In particular, we want to evaluate how satisfied students are with the features of Google Classroom, determine any obstacles or difficulties students might have had utilizing the platform, and examine how teachers modify their pedagogical approaches to fit within the Google Classroom model. Thus, the central question guiding our investigation is: "How do EFL students perceive on the use of Google Classroom for learning English in junior high school?"

LITERATURE REVIEW
Technology in Education

All activities have started to be tied to technology in recent years, particularly since the start of COVID-19; this is unavoidable in the field of education. The use of technology itself has played a major role in the learning activities of teachers in schools. Students can learn through discovering findings with the majority of inquiry programs. The teaching-learning environment can be improved by becoming more flexible through effectively integrating digital tools into flipped learning (Kannan et al., 2020). In relation to technological advances in education, they have made students' lives simpler. For example, students currently make presentations and projects utilizing a variety of software and tools rather than pen and paper. An iPad weighs less than a stack of notebooks. Surfing an E-book is more convenient than browsing a heavy book. These strategies contribute to increased interest in research (Haleem et al., 2022).

Mabrur, et al., (2021) in their study found that many students reported being knowledgeable about and skilled in using e-learning technology, having good access to the necessary tools and devices, and being motivated to enroll in online classes after realizing that learning was partly their responsibility and that

they would be willing to participate in online learning platforms or even social media. It means that positive feedback regarding the students' preparedness for e-learning and online classes has been observed. On the other hand, the amount of students who were still doubtful of their readiness should not be overlooked, even in light of the encouraging outcomes. Education institutions need to minimize the dropout rate and solve the downsides of e-learning as much as they can in order to produce the finest online learning experiences. To enhance online learning experiences, education policy makers need to raise students' levels of awareness, internet access, motivation, and technical and literacy proficiency.

Benefits of Google Classroom

In order to facilitate collaborative learning across devices, mostly mobile ones, Google Classroom is a component of the G Suite for Education, which also hosts and permits the simultaneous use of its other web-based tools including Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Calendar, and Google Hangout. It's very suitable for mobile learning and highly convenient (Kumar & Bervell, 2019).

The study by shaharanee et al., (2016) explores the effectiveness of Google Classroom as a tool for teaching and learning in the context of data mining subject. The researchers used a set of questionnaires to gather data from a sample of 100 students who enrolled in the data mining subject. The analysis of the data was carried out using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to examine the relationship between the identified factors and the effectiveness of the learning activities. The results show that the majority of the students are satisfied with the Google Classroom tool, with all ratios above average. The study highlights the importance of using Google Classroom as a pedagogical tool to enhance the teaching and learning of data mining and related applications. The tool offers a range of features that can be used to facilitate active learning, such as creating and organizing assignments quickly, providing feedback efficiently, and communicating with students easily. The study also emphasizes the need for lecturers to pay more attention to helping students navigate the system and providing clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities.

The other study by Alim et al. (2021) revealed the usability evaluation of Google Classroom and the results showed that the students utilized Google Classroom for their learning in addition to social media. They were engaged internet users. Because of its attractiveness, Google Classroom is a preferred platform for academic objectives, which subsequently results in high satisfaction. Despite many drawbacks, the Institute's choice to include the GC application in its teaching and learning procedures has been supported by the students' favorable experiences.

Implementing Google Classroom in EFL Context

According to Martínez-Monés et al., (2017), Google Classroom (GC) is a collaborative tool for teachers and students that leverages existing Google technologies, such as Google Docs, Google Drive, and Gmail. It is implied that Google Classroom is highly beneficial for facilitating lessons and has the potential to be used effectively for teaching every subject, significantly easing the teaching and learning process. It is in line with a study conducted by Ridho, et al. (2019) on students' perceptions of the Google Classroom application in EFL classrooms

in which the researchers focused on understanding students' views on using Google Classroom, identifying its benefits and challenges. They involved 30 eighth-semester English department students from a university in West Java. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. The study found that students had a positive perception of Google Classroom, noting that it helped improve their learning through participation in online discussions and tasks. Moreover, one study demonstrated that Google Classroom other technology advancements could enhance English teaching and learning and encourage pre-service and in-service teachers in their teaching careers (Nguyen & Dinh, 2019).

Another study was revealed by Khalil (2018) who involved six EFL students from Palestine University by collecting the data from questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The results showed that Google Classroom helped establish a collaborative learing environment as it supported teacher and students' interactions and provided teachers' written feedbacks and easy access to the materials of the course. Similaryly, Jittisukpong (2022) conducted a study at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI) through a survey questionnaire and an interview. This study found that students had a good view of the Google Classroom Application when studying English. The majority of the interviewees indicated that the Google Classroom Application was simple to use and offered real-time feedback from the teacher since Google Classroom allowed the teacher to issue announcements and begin class discussions immediately. As a result, the participants had favorable sentiments regarding utilizing the Google Classroom during the COVID-19 epidemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design in which quantitative and qualitative data were combined in response to participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2018). It is a two-part data collecting project in which the researcher gathers quantitative data in the first phase, evaluates the results, and then plans the second, qualitative phase. In other words, a typical approach can include gathering survey data in the first step, evaluating it, and then conducting qualitative interviews to assist explain unclear, contradicting, or uncommon survey findings. This study was conducted in six junior high school classes of grade 9 at one of junior high schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. The questionnaire was distributed for one week from Tuesday, April 30, 2024 and closed on Saturday, May 4, 2024. The total number of respondents who filled out the link questionnaire was 146 students, consisting of 83 female students and 53 male students.

In the current study, Likert scale questionnaire by Nguyen, & Dinh (Nguyen & Dinh, 2019) was adopted as the survey instrument. All the items in the survey were translated into Indonesian language to help students comprehend the information given in the instrument. The translation was read and reread to ensure its readability, and that it reflected the intended meaning of the original questionnaire. The survey was developed and distributed online using Google Forms to facilitate data collection and tabulation. In collecting qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was conducted for five students as labelled respondent 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The five students were selected from the genders (males and

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females) and their English competences (low, middle, and high levels). These criteria are believed to complement the survey data on their experiences and impressions of using Google Classroom in their English learning.

Regarding the data analysis, the quantitative data were analyzed with a descriptive analysis for having the mean and standard deviation. In analyzing the qualitative data, a thematic analysis was used by condensing, presenting, and concluding the data (Miles et al., 2014).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Finding
Students' academic achievement and motivation through Google Classrrom

All the participating students were asked to complete the questionnaire instrument via google form. The instrument of the research used a linear scale from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) to Strongly Agree (SA). As shown in Table 1 in response to the students' academic achievement and motivation, it indicated a big difference in using Google Classroom. More students claimed that the use of Google Classroom in Learning English motivates the students (46.7%), facilitates learning content (62.8%), improves the traditional monotonous classroom atmosphere while developing their self-learning skills (64.2%), develops students' English (78.8%), and it can be used wherever or whenever as a positive learning environment (67.9%). In terms of teachers, these respondents agreed that Google Classroom also allowed them to conduct continuous evaluation of students' progress (60.8%).

Table 1. Students' Views on Their Academic Achievement and Motivation

No	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	STD
1	I feel very motivated in learning English with the use of Google Classroom.	2.9	9.5	40.9	25.5	21.2	3.54	1.00
2	I feel that Google Classroom improves the effectiveness of English learning.	6.6	9.5	40.9	25.5	17.5	3.40	1.07
3	Google Classroom helps add variety to learning materials.	2.9	9.5	24.8	31.4	31.4	3.80	1.07
4	The use of Google Classroom helps develop independent learning skills in students.	3.6	10.9	21.2	32.1	32.1	3.78	1.12
5	Google Classroom helps teachers and students evaluate English learning.	3.6	7.3	28.5	31.4	29.2	3.77	1.06
6	Google Classroom helps develop students' skills in the modern era.	3.6	2.9	14.6	27	51.8	4.22	1.02
7	Google Classroom can be very helpful in facilitating face-to-face learning.	5.8	7.3	27.7	29.9	29.2	3.70	1.13
8	Google Classroom creates a positive learning environment.	2.9	3.6	25.5	38	29.9	3.89	0.98

The data in Table 1 is supported by the qualitative finding regarding their academic achievement and motivation. Respondent 5 stated, "*Google Classroom helps me to increase my independence in learning and personal skills, because I can access Google Classroom easily, and can listen to the video link many times if we want to replay the learning video.*" This interview excerpt demonstrates how Google Classroom provides some learning sources such as videos to encourage the students to learn English independently and positively.

Students' communication and interaction through Google Classroom

In relation to how Google Classroom could create communication and interaction, Table 2 showed that a vast majority (83.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom can be used anywhere and anytime, indicating its flexibility. The majority (65.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom encourages interaction and participation of shy students. A significant portion (63.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom builds a combination of learning on self-learning capabilities. Over two-thirds (65.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom facilitates interaction and communication between traditional learning (face-to-face) and self-directed learning. Most students (68.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom encourages student social interaction in self-directed learning.

Table 2. Students' Views on Their Communication and Interaction

No	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	STD
9	Google Classroom can be used anywhere and anytime.	2.2	2.9	10.9	20.4	63.5	4.40	0.95
10	Google Classroom encourages interaction and participation of shy students.	4.4	5.8	24.1	29.2	36.5	3.87	1.10
11	Google Classroom builds a combination of learning on self-learning capabilities.	2.9	7.3	27	32.1	30.7	3.80	1.05
12	Google Classroom facilitates interaction and communication between traditional learning (face-to-face) and self-directed learning.	2.9	9.5	22.6	37.2	27.7	3.78	1.05
13	Google Classroom encourages student social interaction in self-directed learning.	1.5	8	21.9	38.7	29.9	3.90	0.95

The data above is supported with the qualitative data in relation to their communication and interaction. Respondent 2 stated, "*Learning English through the Google Classroom application is very practical because I can access learning materials, assignments and other resources online. Interaction with teachers and classmates can also be done through communication features in the application, such as chat or discussion forums. This can provide greater flexibility and accessibility in the learning process.*" Meanwhile respondent 3 found, "*My experience while using Google Classroom in learning English is that it can help me in learning, especially during online times, then it can be accessed anywhere and anytime.*" These excerpts show that students' experiences on the use of

Google Classroom in learning English illustrate it as a flexible, accessible, and practical learning application to use, and this builds interactions between teacher and students.

Students' information access through Google Classroom

Regarding information access, Table 3 shows that a large majority (80.3%) agreed or strongly agreed that they can have quick and efficient access to the learning materials they need in Google Classroom. A significant portion (63.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that they can get direct feedback from friends and teachers with the use of Google Classroom. Moreover, the majority (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that Google Classroom helps develop their IT competencies.

Table 3. Students' View on Their Access of Information

14	I can have quick and efficient access to the learning materials I need in Google Classroom.	1.5	5.8	12.4	28.5	51.8	4.23	0.98
15	I can get direct feedback from friends and teachers with the use of Google Classroom.	2.2	8	26.3	32.1	31.4	3.83	1.02
16	Google Classroom helps develop my IT competencies.	0.7	6.6	16.8	34.3	41.6	4.11	0.94

The qualitative analysis also supports the quantitative findings above regarding their access of information of the participants. Respondent 1 found, "*In my personal opinion, using Google Classroom is very helpful for teachers, especially making it easier for teachers to give assignments. So, I think using Google Classroom is very useful and helpful*", and respondent 4 stated, "*While using Google Classroom in learning English, I had a very positive experience. This platform makes it easy to organize and access learning materials online.*" These excerpts from the interview reveal an affirmative impression on the use of Google Classroom as it could effectively provide more information access such as English learning sources.

Overall, the above results indicated positive perceptions among junior high school EFL students regarding the use of Google Classroom for learning English. They perceived it as a motivating, effective, and flexible tool that enhanced their learning experience, facilitated communication and interaction, and provided easy access to learning materials and feedback. These findings suggested that Google Classroom can be a valuable platform for language learning in educational settings.

Discussion

The current study aims to investigate EFL students' perceptions of using Google Classroom in junior high schools. The findings of this study reveal valuable insights into how junior high school EFL students perceive the use of Google Classroom for learning English. Overall, the data show that there is a positive attitude among the students towards the platform, with students acknowledging its benefits in terms of motivation, effectiveness, flexibility, communication, and access to learning materials. One notable aspect highlighted by the data is the role of technology, particularly Google Classroom, in addressing the challenges faced by EFL classrooms, such as limited class periods and

difficulties in creating stress-free environments for language practice. The platform's ability to provide access to learning materials anytime and anywhere seems to resonate well with students, allowing for increased engagement and participation, especially among shy learners. Moreover, the findings underscore the importance of integrating digital tools into education, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the adoption of online learning platforms. Google Classroom emerges as a promising solution for bridging the gap between traditional face-to-face instruction and self-directed learning, facilitating interaction, collaboration, and feedback among students and teachers.

This result is consistent with relevant research findings. For example, Rosita and Albashtawi's studies found that students generally had a positive experience with Google Classroom, appreciating its user-friendly interface, flexibility, and collaborative features (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Rosita et al., 2019). The platform enhanced teacher-student interaction, especially in hybrid learning, through real-time feedback and discussion forums, fostering active student participation. In addition, it was found it helpful for learning, quick task completion, and easy access to materials. It improved their learning ability by allowing them to rewatch videos, increased their academic achievement, and promoted active, self-directed learning. The study recommends preparing students to use Google Classroom to maintain quality education and aligns with previous studies on its effectiveness (Noah & Gbemisola, 2020).

The Google Classroom application is well-suited for distance learning. It integrates seamlessly with other Google products such as Gmail, Drive, Hangouts, YouTube, and Calendar. These numerous features make it easier for teachers to conduct learning activities (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019). Based on these observations, it is evident that adopting current and emerging technologies, such as virtual classrooms, is essential for ensuring quality education.

The results of this current study also align with Bhimani's (2020) research, which highlights Google Classroom as an effective platform for teaching physiology. According to Bhimani, this platform enhances learning outcomes despite being virtual. This reinforces the value of Google Classroom in supporting educational activities online. Dewi et al. (2020) found that Google Classroom can improve students' reading comprehension scores. Additionally, research by Sukmawati and Nensia (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019) indicated that Google Classroom plays a significant role in learning English. Their study demonstrated that students can maintain better focus and discipline due to the deadlines for assignments. These findings highlight the effectiveness of Google Classroom in enhancing various aspects of student learning.

The study by Alssager & Nasir (2021) conducted at Sebha University in Libya, aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of Google Classroom as a tool for asynchronous e-learning. The study surveyed 91 students from different faculties and departments who had used Google Classroom in their studies. The results showed that the majority of students were satisfied with the tool, with all five measured aspects (perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, communication and interaction, benefit, and student satisfaction) receiving above-average ratings. The study found that students found Google Classroom easy to access, with 83.8% of respondents agreeing that signing in to the platform was straightforward.

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Additionally, 85.8% of students reported that accessing Google Classroom courses and materials was easy. The tool was also found to make the process of submitting assignments easier, with almost 90% of respondents agreeing that it simplified this process. The study highlighted the importance of training students to use Google Classroom effectively, as 15% of respondents reported that it did require training.

Another relevant study regarding its flexibility from the study conducted by Ali and Maksum (2020) showed Google Classroom's flexibility in time and location was crucial, allowing students and teachers to learn and teach from anywhere. Its user-friendly interface made it accessible to all, facilitating a smooth transition to online learning. The platform's features streamlined assignment distribution, submission, and grading, ensuring accurate and timely evaluations. It also supported multimedia content, making lessons engaging and interactive. The integration with Google services like Gmail, Drive, and Calendar enhanced the user experience, creating a cohesive ecosystem for educational activities. The study concluded that Google Classroom effectively supported the ICT learning process during the pandemic. Its flexibility, ease of use, and comprehensive features made it an ideal tool for remote learning, ensuring educational continuity and quality. This research highlights the potential of e-learning platforms to maintain education during disruptions, suggesting the importance of incorporating such technologies in education systems beyond the pandemic.

The other study by Jumadi (2021) examining the effectiveness of the project collaborative model assisted by Google Classroom (PjCM-GC) also support the results in the current study. The research employed a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group design. The study involved 86 science students in grade XI from SMAN 1 Aikmel, Lombok Timur, Indonesia. The students were randomly assigned to three groups: the demonstration model (DM), the project collaborative model (PjCM), and the project collaborative model assisted by Google Classroom (PjCM-GC). The results showed that the PjCM-GC group had a significant difference in the level of creative thinking skills compared to the DM and PjCM groups. The PjCM-GC group demonstrated a gain score of 0.47, indicating a medium level of effectiveness. In contrast, the DM and PjCM groups showed low levels of creative thinking skills, with gain scores of 0.00 and 0.68, respectively. The study found that the PjCM-GC model was the most effective in improving students' creative thinking skills, particularly in terms of fluency, flexibility, and originality. The results suggest that incorporating Google Classroom into the project collaborative model can enhance the learning process and improve students' creative thinking skills. The study highlights the potential of the PjCM-GC model as an alternative for policymakers and teachers to address the problem of low creative thinking skills among students.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, Google Classroom holds significant potential as a tool for enhancing language learning experiences among junior high school EFL students. The features, such as accessibility, flexibility, and support for communication and collaboration, align well with the needs and preferences of learners in digital age classrooms. Thus, the results have some implications. First, TEFL teachers need

to leverage these findings to optimize their use of Google Classroom and tailor their pedagogical approaches to better meet the needs of diverse learners. By harnessing the platform's capabilities effectively, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that foster student engagement, motivation, and success in language acquisition.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The limitations include the sample size and demographic characteristics of the participants, which may not be representative of all junior high school EFL students. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data from students, which may be subject to bias and interpretation. The study focuses specifically on the perceptions of students regarding Google Classroom and may not capture the perspectives of educators or other stakeholders involved in the language learning process. Future research could explore the experiences and perspectives of teachers, administrators, and parents to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of digital tools on language education as well as explore barriers to adoption, technical issues, and disparities in access to technology to inform more inclusive and equitable practices in digital language learning environments.

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