

University Learning Management System: A Promising Solution to Improve Students' English Ability in Large English Classes

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ABSTRACT

The covid-19 significantly shifted the trend in teaching. University Learning Management System, often known as e-learning was believed to be the form of future education. One of the solutions offered was that its various features utilize the need to manage to teach large English classes. The design of the research was casual-comparative research where two groups were compared based on their mean score of the four tests. They were the first and second quiz scores, the scores of students' mid-semester exams, and their final scores. The first group studied consisted of 50 students taught using the old normal way, while the other group consisted of 50 students also studied by utilizing the availability of their online learning platform or the university LMS. The data were analyzed using parametric statistic, since the data distribution was normal, then independent t test was applied. The data were used to answer the hypothesis whether or not there was a significant difference between the two groups. The research findings showed that the significant two-tailed independent test was lower than the 0.05 alpha significant, therefore, it was concluded that there was significant different between the two groups. Shortly, learning management system was the alternative to manage large English classes at universities, that worked on improving students' English ability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching large classes is a common thing in many developing countries, like Indonesia. Saving the budget is one of the reasons why institutions offer large classes (Jimakorn & Singhasiri, 2006). In many countries in Asia, many language teachers come to a class that concludes a great number of students (Trang, 2015). Such an environment is commonly believed to pose potential threats to the quality of education (Hornsby, 2013). It is complicated having 50 up to 60 students seated in one class. One of the challenges is to make sure that every student receives the same treatment (Makniyah, 2020). The imbalance in giving the treatment is one of the causes that fails students to obtain the expected learning

outcomes (Kher & Rani, 2019). Thus, it is excruciating for the teachers to assist the students to develop their language ability since there are too many students in the class (Anindya et al., 2020).

Many research work on the issues of teaching large classes attempts to produce certain guidelines to manage to teach large classes. Since large classes are often believed to correlate with students' low performance, certain pedagogical procedures are needed. Two different approaches offered to manage large classes are the small-class approach and the problem-solution approach (Shamim, 1993). Combining theory and innovative teaching methodology with advice on good teaching practice is another guideline that teachers may use to face challenges of large numbers of students in their classroom (Gibbs & Jenkins, 2014). Using posters, graphic illustrations, and PowerPoint presentations are said to be effective teaching tools in managing large classes in Nigeria (Aduradola & Ale, 2013). Mobile phones text messages are found to be useful to enhance students' participation in large classes (Thatcher & Mooney, 2008). The similarities of the previous research attempt at triggering the students to participate more in the class. It is often found that during the teaching and learning process, only a few students focus on the process while some other tend to work on unrelated activities. The ability to manage large classes depends on the teacher's ability to create well-managed classes and cultivate teaching abilities. Effectively plan and adopt strategies teaching and assessment will be strengthened the teaching process (Asodike & Onyeike, 2016).

Although more studies working on the efforts to provide a theoretical framework to manage large classes, they have not yet addressed teachers' views, in terms of the necessity to repeat the same activities in other large classes, that they cost a lot of energy. Referring to the fact that many disputes of large classes have been scientifically studied, and the changes in teaching trend, in terms of the use of technology which is becoming favored, it is necessary to have a look at other possible recommendations for teaching large classes which are more student-life related. Since the first time of the covid-19 outbreak in 2020, Indonesia as one of the developing countries is forced to shift its teaching paradigm which is mostly based on the teachers-students face-to-face interaction in the classroom, into virtual meetings. More and more online-teaching platforms are introduced, and more higher education institutions develop their software, commonly known as Learning Management System. LMS is commonly depicted as an online learning technology utilized to create, manage, and deliver course materials (Sabharwal et al., 2019). In today's worldwide digital environment, LMS plays an important role in engaging and promoting teaching and learning. LMS not only provides instructions and electronic resources to improve and enhance student learning in a collaborative environment but also allows teachers to focus on designing meaningful teaching activities (Kattoua et al., 2013).

Moreover, trends in education have significantly shifted. More and more institutions, mostly universities develop their online-learning platform to cope with the 'new normal' in which face-to-face interactions are strictly forbidden. Huge numbers of universities have managed their e-learning, more and more lecturers, teachers, and students are introduced to the new way of teaching and learning. The pandemic has created a new paradigm that the future holds into. E-learning is the future of education (Goyal, 2012).

Many works are discussing how e-learning becomes the alternative for future education. It is claimed that learners have freedom of choice over "location, speed, and time" when it comes to the advantages of E-learning (Clarke, 2004). Institutions to embrace ICT in education since these technologies are beneficial (Wanjala et al., 2011). Promoting e-learning offers developing countries potential and comparative advantage (Berhanu, 2010). The platform also shows a positive influence on students' attitudes as well as behavior. Experience, positive attitudes, confidence, enjoyment, usefulness, intention to use, motivation, and whether or not students possessed ICT abilities are all linked (Bendania, 2011). Students are willing to embrace the deployment of technology and the change to an E-learning paradigm of education (Fageeh, 2011). Teacher and student perspectives of E-learning in the English department in the similar environment are good and the system has positively influenced the learning environment (Al-Dosari, 2011). To conclude, many believe that e-learning and the likes

learning platform are one promising solution to survive with online learning trend. It does not only provide features to ease the learning process, it also the answer of the current demands in education.

Various features supported by the system are one of the promising points that may help teachers to manage their large numbers of students. What teachers need during offline classes are equipped by the Learning Management System. For instance, there is a feature to record students' attendance, to attach teaching video, to attach template for assignments, to schedule when students may submit or see particular lesson, to upload different files or e-books that students can easily download, to trace whether or not the students complete and follow everything included in their accounts, and to grade and record their accomplishment. Meanwhile, since technology nowadays is students' everyday use that they no longer need to be introduced to. Laptops, computers, mobile phones provide unlimited access to any information. Utilizing the availability of university learning management system is somehow effective due to the convenience that it presents, that it can assist students equally, that teachers may only need to set and manage their lessons in one-time preparation, but they are possible to be repeated unlimitedly without having to worry about the time and energy spent.

Although many works seem to have positive attitude toward the existence of Learning Management System, they have not yet addressed the issue by providing empirical data that may support the statement. It has been two years since the online learning has become the central issue that more and more educators use platform-based media and gain its convenience. Thus, though the Covid era has finally come to its end, online classes is still under the spotlight.

To do so, it is necessary to prove the efficiency of the system by comparing two groups of students which are managed by two different ways; teaching them by utilizing the availability of university learning management system and teaching them fully offline. This study attempts to answer the hypothesis whether or not there is significant differences between the scores obtained by students of offline classes and students of online classes organized by the system.

2. METHODS

The study was causal-comparative research aiming at answering the hypothesis of how different Learning Management System and the common offline classes are. The participants were university students seated in large English classes. The students consisted of two big groups; each group was 50 students. Each group learned the same materials, same topic, and same discussion. They performed the same type of exams, quizzes, and exercises. While the old normal group was meeting with the lecturer, the new normal group learns the materials attached to their e-learning account. The materials were presented in a short video, delivered by the same lecturer. What they watched was the materials taught by the same lecturer in the offline class. Shortly, every week both groups learned the same things.

The study however was limited to the fact that the students learned English from the basic that their learning outcomes were not set on how well they could speak English fluently, rather, their understandings of how sentences were constructed and what common English expressions were used in a particular context. The materials were presented from the same sources. The students were not expected to be completely fluent in English because they were not majoring in English, their English input was low, they needed to learn basic structure in English sentences, therefore the materials given were based on these situations and needs. For instance, since they needed to understand how a sentence should be arranged to make it meaningful in line with the context, the materials provided were a series of pictures, some passages, various exercises, where the students' performances were based on written test, not spoken test. The materials, test and types of questions given to the students were decided by the team teaching of the subjects. This was to validate that the design of the lesson had referred to the result of the Focus Group Discussion. Every semester, the team teaching consisted of 11 English lecturers gathered to evaluate what had been taught during the previous semester. Thus, it could be ensured, that what presented to the students had been carefully verified and validated.

The first quiz was done on the fourth week, or after the students had learned for three weeks. The offline group did the quizzes in the classroom. They were given 20 minutes to work on their papers

and then the answers were discussed that they knew their scores on the same day. Meanwhile, the online group did the quiz by signing in to their e-learning account. They were given 20 minutes to do the job. They could easily click on the answers they believed to be correct, then they knew the scores once they submitted their work. Their second quiz, their mid-term test, and their finals were administered the way they did their first quiz. One group did the work in the classroom, the other group did the work virtually through the e-learning platform.

The score obtained from the four tests, then were statistically calculated in order to get the mean score. The mean score was to reflect each participant from each group. Since in casual comparative research the data were tested using by certain test, the analysis was run by referring to SPSS program. To decide whether the data were analyzed using the parametric on non-parametric statistics, the data were tested for its distribution using Saphiro-wilk test. The Shapiro-Wilk test is used to determine whether or not a random sample is drawn from a normal distribution. If the data distribution was normal, then the data were analyzed using the independent t-test, if the data were not normal, then the data would be analyzed using the Mann-Whitney test which was part of the non-parametric statistic. However, since the data distribution in the study was found to be normal, therefore, the mean score of the both groups were then analyzed by referring to the independent-t test. The t-test was run by using SPSS program to get the significant finding.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Since each group was given four tests, the scores analyzed using the independent t-test here were the mean scores of each student from each group. They were presented as follows:

Table. 1 the mean score of each student from each group

Participants (Offline Class)	Mean Score	Participants (LMS Class)	Mean Score
1	86,25	1	85
2	67,5	2	85
3	85	3	82,5
4	67,5	4	78,75
5	72,5	5	76,25
6	68,75	6	76,25
7	55	7	76,25
8	50	8	76,25
9	47,5	9	72,5
10	45	10	75
11	45	11	75
12	55	12	75
13	45	13	65
14	47,5	14	70
15	30	15	70
16	40	16	70
17	57,5	17	72,5
18	55	18	72,5
19	47,5	19	28,75
20	40	20	65
21	45	21	66,25
22	57,5	22	63,75
23	55	23	61,25
24	47,5	24	61,25
25	45	25	61,25
26	57,5	26	61,25

27	47,5	27	61,25
28	45	28	61,25
29	32,5	29	65
30	30	30	62,5
31	47,5	31	66,25
32	40	32	62,5
33	50	33	70
34	50	34	70
35	57,5	35	67,5
36	55	36	66,25
37	48,75	37	68,75
38	55	38	68,75
39	43,75	39	68,75
40	47,5	40	65
41	51,25	41	68,75
42	52,5	42	71,25
43	55	43	71,25
44	56,25	44	71,25
45	47,5	45	68,75
46	55	46	68,75
47	42,5	47	68,75
48	50	48	68,75
49	47,5	49	68,75
50	40	50	65

The data were checked for its normal distribution by using the Shapiro-wilk test run in the SPSS program.

Table 2. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Mean_Score	.397	100	.000	.184	100	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The significant score indicated that the data distribution was normal since the significant score was lower than 0,05. Then, the data were analyzed using statistic parametric, the independent t-test.

Table 3. Independent test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Mean_Score	2.217	.140	-2.118	98	.037	-32.300	15.253	-62.569	-2.031
Equal variances assumed									
Equal variances not assumed			-2.118	50.067	.039	-32.300	15.253	-62.936	-1.664

From the independent test, it was concluded that the significant score was lower than the alpha. Therefore, this result should have proven the hypothesis that there was significant different between the two groups.

The data has shown that online class managed by the university management system or LMS performs better in terms of their test scores compared to those of offline classes. The results may lead

to some possibilities of the learning management system as an alternative to teaching large English classes.

First, seen from the students' aspect where most students taking English subject at the university were freshmen. These students just completed their education in high school and continued it by being university students. Freshmen or first-year students are grouped as young adults. They are not young but at the same time, they are not adults. They are in between. Psychologically, they are in process of bridging, being in between. They are trying to make some adjustments to their new life, including the way they study and the way they see themselves as young adults. Students that studied offline took sometimes to make some alterations about how they should be in the class. Many of them appeared to be very shy and quiet, and not saying anything was assumed to be much better than active participation. The class was monopolized by dominant students, in which the majority of the class was glad to be seated and listened to. It was, however, pretty complicated to portrait the types of students who kept themselves silent, being unspotted. They never asked questions, they were reluctant to answer and acted ignorantly.

Meanwhile, the online class students were less effort in adjusting to new social life, that they were required to be with their gadget, and not having to meet different people studying a subject they prefer not to take. In other ways, the online class students were more benefited. In addition to that, these students had no idea how far their classmates understood the materials. This situation was advantageous since it gave them no distractions. They could easily focus on what was being presented in their learning platform. If they could not understand, they could easily repeat the presentation done by their lecturer as often as they wanted or needed. If they had questions, they could easily drop what they meant to ask through the system easily without having to be noticed by the crowds. This somehow made them feel safe. The fact was the online students asked more questions and more frequently compared to the offline students who assumedly to be reluctant, nervous, or scared having to raise hands wanting to ask questions.

Being university students required them to be fully adults in no time, and Knowles in 1988 popularized the term andragogy, these students should be ready to move from dependency to increasing self-directedness as he/she matures and can direct his/her learning; draws on his/her accumulated reservoir of life experiences to aid learning; be ready to learn when he/she assumes new social or life roles; be ready for problem-centered and wants to apply new learning immediately; and be motivated to learn by internal, rather than external factors. The learning management system facilitated the students to be more autonomous in their learning. The students can easily adjust to the gadgets, use them for learning purposes, have many options to learn, and browse huge numbers of learning resources, be more independent, and gradually improve their confidence to be a mature grown-up.

Furthermore, seen from the lecturer's aspect, the system helped in managing the naturally large class. In an offline class, the teacher or the lecturer had to be in the class. The morning class would be more beneficial because the lecturer came with full morning energy. The late afternoon class would receive unequal treatment since it was already the end of the day, the energy spent was about to reach its maximum limit. What was presented in the morning was different from what was presented in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, the students of online classes were free to access the learning materials at any time they wanted, the energy used by the lecturer stayed the same, the emotion stayed the same, therefore the treatments received were equal. Shortly, teachers and lecturers can be better managing their lessons, in terms of practicality by utilizing the university learning management system.

4. CONCLUSION

By referring to the statistics results obtained by running the independent t-test where the alpha was higher than the significant of the two-tailed scores, it is said that the group managed with Learning Management System performed better than the offline group. Some probabilities of the convenience

received by the LMS group have been carefully explained that it is reasonable to conclude that the university learning management system significantly benefited both lecturers and students. The young adults were helped to adjust to learning without having to struggle much about the big difference between how they used to be in high school and how they should be in the university.

Nevertheless, the convenience provided by the system should not be defining how the teaching and learning process should always be. The system should always function to support the process, not becoming the central issue or point to depend on. No matter how promising the features are offered, there are aspects that even the most sophisticated technology cannot cover, real interactions are needed because learning does not mean being academically brilliant, teachers and lecturers are responsible to shape the students' characters, emotions. Meeting students in person is crucial.

Therefore, the learning management system, any online learning platforms should be used to help the learning process, but it does not mean that online class takes full control.

It is recommended that blended learning should be one main option that can facilitate the new trends in teaching. Blended learning how it is defined, the combination of face-to-face interactions between teachers and students in the classroom, and performing the class using online platforms, may accommodate the need to keep utilizing technology and the need to be in the classroom meeting the students in person.

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