

Indonesian EFL Students' Perceptions on Synchronous and Asynchronous E-Learning

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ABSTRACT

The use of technology in language learning has been extensively expanded. However, the investigation into the implementation of e-learning through video conferences (synchronous) and learning management systems (asynchronous) particularly in English Language Teaching is still lacking. This study was aimed to investigate the students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT. The method used in this study is an online survey through google form. There were 167 EFL students from accounting department of Universitas Pamulang taking part as the participants. The findings show that students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT are positive. Meanwhile, using synchronous e-learning is preferred as it facilitates students have two-way communication with the lecturer. Moreover, the presence of lecturer in e-learning is quite crucial. It shows that no matter how sophisticated the technology is, the presence of teachers is still expected by students. This study shows what EFL students perceive toward synchronous and asynchronous e-learning.

Keywords: **Students' perception, synchronous e-learning, asynchronous e-learning, EFL students**

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, online learning resources have become a vital focus of discussion in the education and research literature, especially at the level of higher education. The heads of various universities have paid great attention to online education as an important teaching resource (Bonk & Zhang, 2006). These online learning resources have proven to be a technology that enables the largest students at any time and any place to have access to educational opportunities. Online resources are now considered as a means to improve teaching, to build flexibility in teaching, and to reduce teaching cost (Kirkwood & Price, 2014).

Most of the current academic research has determined that the online learning in teaching innovation basically attracts students through specific correspondence education (Drachler & Kalz, 2016; Van Doorn & Eklund, 2013; Walji et al., 2016). Facts have proved that the adequacy of video-conferencing contrasted with close up and personal interaction and capability of video-conferencing in training for geographically remote learners, who do not have access to traditional educational setup, has been proved beneficial (Malik et al., 2017). As a result, these matters establish a discourse on video conferencing equipment, that is, how to use real media for teaching. However, they did not provide information about the most effective method that can be used to contact learners in dynamic learning. An article by (Bonk & Zhang, 2006) provided teaching knowledge about synchronous and asynchronous learning, in which they discussed online teaching methods and how learners can adjust their online teaching ideas.

Synchronous learning involves the exchange of ideas and information with one or more participants at the same time. It promotes efficient education and provides variety ways of networking, sharing and collaborating in real-time (Beldarrain, 2006). In an e-learning environment, examples of

synchronous learning include online, real-time teacher guidance and feedback, skype conversation, chat rooms, and virtual classroom, where everyone is online and can work together (Murphy et al., 2011). A study conducted by (Han, 2013) stated that online synchronous group discussion and effective control that depended on a specialized instrument, empowered participants to communicate through text and pictures. The study was conducted on ninth grade students. Both of the groups' members anticipated that an effective mediator must be active and he should keep the live discussions focused to help participants to remain on the topic. Participants also told that they basically do not need the moderator to express their academic opinion on the topic during the discussion.

The researchers concluded that the type of discussion that teachers encourage and the degree to which students participate in synchronous discussion affect the learning of students at the ninth grade and graduate level. They also found that the way of discussion differs between synchronous and asynchronous online conversation. Different studies have found that compared with asynchronous learning members, people engaged in synchronous learning (a) can only find limited ways to communicate, (b) tend to concentrate, (c) feel a greater sense of contribution, and (d) experience better assignment/course completion rate (Hrastinski, 2006; Watts, 2016).

(Han, 2013) found that the use of higher education video conferencing in synchronized teaching will affect the sense of interaction between learners and their instructor. Han found that in courses that include teacher videos, students can overcome the feeling of being far away from the teacher compared to the courses that do not use videos. (Moore 1993, n.d.) talked about transaction distance and Han believes that the use of video-assisted teaching can overcome transaction distance. He believes that important collaboration with teachers and peers may minimize transaction distance. As (Moore 1993, n.d.) pointed out, transactional distance is a teaching phenomenon. Learners will experience learning in the process of living apart from their mentors and peers, cooperating with each other and building relationship. Participants may feel different levels of transaction distance in online courses, which mainly depend on the level of shared discussions, the content set by the instructor for them, and the level of autonomy of the course (Park, 2011).

Different from Synchronous type of e-learning, Asynchronous learning is self-paced, allowing participants to exchange ideas or information without relying on the simultaneous participation of other participants (Pattnayak & Pattnaik, 2016; Safavi, 2008). In asynchronous learning, some applications can be used, such as e-mails, Wikis, discussion boards, network-supported textbooks, and hypertext documents. Learners can complete coursework, discussions, questions, etc. in their own time (Buelow et al., 2018). Unfortunately, individual participant interactions in asynchronous courses cannot instill a sense of shared social existence or participation in online education (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2010). They find that participants in asynchronous online learning are looking for content uploaded by their instructor, or they are trying to engage themselves in meaningful learning tasks. Fortunately, today's designers of online learning resources have been able to understand and incorporate the underlying nature of social interaction, and at the same time understand different factors such as physical, social, emotional, and psychological aspects, and their relationship with learners' participation in online course (Yamagata, 2020).

(Gao et al., 2013) found in a study that many people who have participated in asynchronous online courses are completely new to the experience involved in the development process of understanding and becoming active learners. Most people need to modify their role as online learners and their assumption about the role of teachers. (Ruey, 2010) identified online learning as specific personalized process, but in order to become active and effective online learners, students need some prerequisites, that is, to know the use of the technology used in the course and the ability to search for the course materials to learn how to communicate with other participants. Ultimately, in order to succeed in online learning, learners need time to learn how to develop online activities related to their courses, which can be adapted to their daily work while performing all other family and work duties (Reese, 2015).

In the field of English Language Teaching, the issue of e-learning has been conducted by many researchers. (Cai, 2012) identified the advantages of e-learning in English language teaching and how teachers change their teaching strategies to improve students' comprehension quickly and effectively. In line with Chai, (Chhabra, 2012) found that through the innovative ELT methods and the use of e-learning tools, teachers can improve students' interaction within classroom. Moreover, (Zakarneh, 2018) found that e-learning in ELT more effective than traditional face to face system. It can be seen from the result of the research showing that more than fifty percent of the students agree e-learning in English Language Teaching.

Most of the research regarding e-learning in ELT address the tools or the method used in e-learning, its benefits, and the students' perception on e-learning itself (Amin & Mohammed, 2018; Shahabadi & Uplane, 2015). Meanwhile, research focused on the teaching English through synchronous and asynchronous E-learning seen from the perspectives of non-English department students is relatively scarce. Therefore, this study will fill in the gap by investigating Non-English department students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT. More particularly, this study aimed to explore students' preference for using synchronous and asynchronous e-learning resources at higher education level, that is in the accounting department of Universitas Pamulang which has never been conducted before. It also emphasized the students' view of the need of teachers' presence in the use of e-learning recourses.

METHOD

The research method used in this study is an online survey. The data about students' perceptions obtained by distributing questionnaires through Google form. The participants of this study were 167 students, consist of 39 males and 128 females in accounting department of Universitas Pamulang.

Table 1. Number of Respondent

Gender	Number of Respondent
Male	39
Female	128
Amount	167

Questions about student perceptions are arranged by adjusting the conditions of online lectures, which consist of 12 questions that will investigate Non-English department students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT. More particularly, this study aimed to explore students' preference for using synchronous and asynchronous e-learning resources at higher education level. It also emphasized the students' view of the need of teachers' presence in the use of e-learning resources. The close-ended question allows respondents to answer on the 5-point Likert scale. The score ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Students' perception on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning

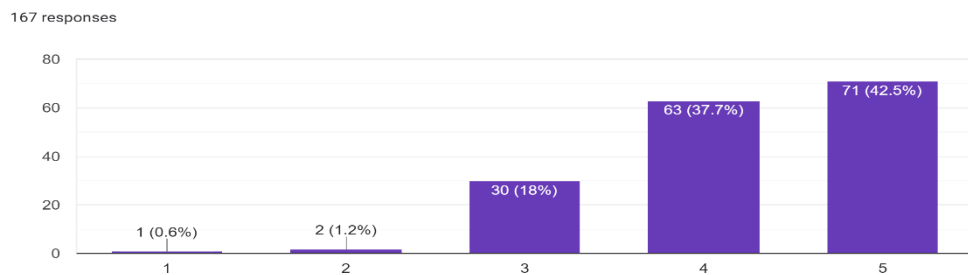


Figure 1. E-learning assists learning process

In the first question, E-learning in ELT either synchronously or asynchronously assist learning process, one student or 0.6% of the respondents strongly disagree, two students or 1.2% of the respondents disagree, 30 students or 18% of the respondents answered doubt, 63 students or 37.7% of the respondents agree, and 71 students or 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed. Based on this data, if the respondents who agree and strongly agree are combined, it can be seen that most of the students or 80.2% of the respondents agreed that E-learning in English language teaching assist the learning process. This percentage is quite convincing that most of the students have a good perception on applying e-learning to assist learning process and they have good attitude toward e-learning in general either e-learning synchronously or asynchronously.

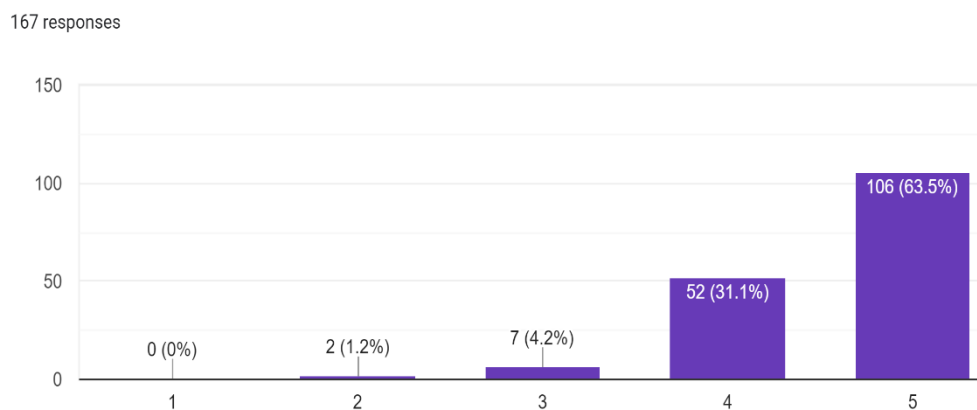


Figure 2. English lecturing asynchronously is more flexible

In the second question, English lecturing asynchronously through LMS is more flexible in case of time and place, none of students chose strongly disagree, two students or 1.2% of the respondents disagree, seven students or 4.2% of the respondents chose doubt, 52 students or 31.1% of the respondents

agree, and 106 students or 63.5% of the students strongly agree. The result showed that none of students strongly disagree, two students who disagree with the statement and 7 students were doubt about the answer. It means that if the answer strongly disagreed, disagree, and doubt are summed up there were 9 students or 5.4% of respondents who have negative views of e-learning lectures asynchronously. In contrast, most of students or 94.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree that Asynchronous e-learning courses are more flexible in terms of place and time. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of students have positive attitude and very comfortable with e-learning lectures asynchronously because they can adjust the time and place in attending lectures.

167 responses

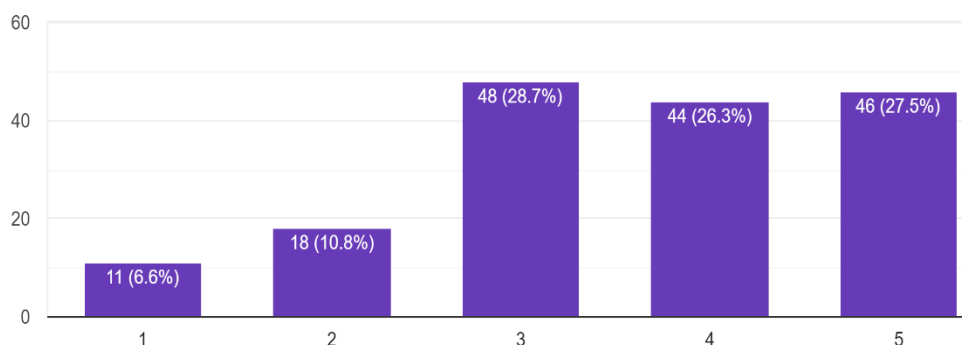


Figure 3. Lecturing asynchronously is more efficient internet quota

In the third question, lecturing asynchronously is more efficient in terms of internet quota, 11 students or 6.6% of the respondents strongly disagree, 18 students or 10.8% of the respondents disagree, 48 students or 28.7% of the respondents answered doubt, 44 students or 26.3% of the respondents agree, and 46 students or 27.5% of the respondents strongly agreed. Based on this data, if the respondents who strongly disagree, disagree, and doubt are summed up 77 student or 46.1% of the respondents did not consider lecturing asynchronously is more efficient in terms of internet quota. Besides, if the respondents who agree and strongly agree are combined, 90 students or 53.8% of the respondents agreed that lecturing asynchronously is more efficient in terms of internet quota. This percentage is less convincing as the students who agree and disagree with the statement are quite equal. It can be assumed that only half of students considered lecturing asynchronously is more efficient in terms of quota rather than synchronous teaching.

167 responses

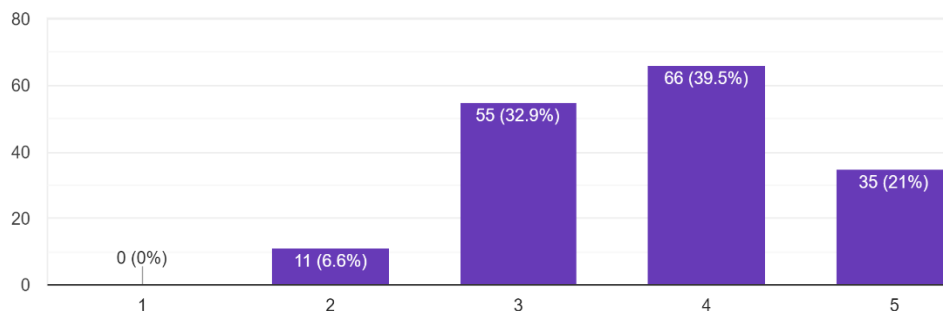


Figure 4. material provided asynchronously is complete

In the fourth question, the material provided asynchronously (in LMS) is complete and easy to understand, none of students chose strongly disagree, 11 or 6.6% of the respondents disagree, 55 students or 32.9% of the respondents chose doubt, 66 students or 39.5% of the respondents agree, and 35 students or 21% of the respondents strongly agree. The data showed that more than half of students thought the material provided in LMS is quite complete. Indeed, it can be assumed that students have no problem accessing the material for learning so that the teaching and learning process should run well. But on the other hand, there were more than thirty percent of students who feel doubt about this. This percentage showed that students was unsure that the available material can help them learn more easily and effectively.

167 responses

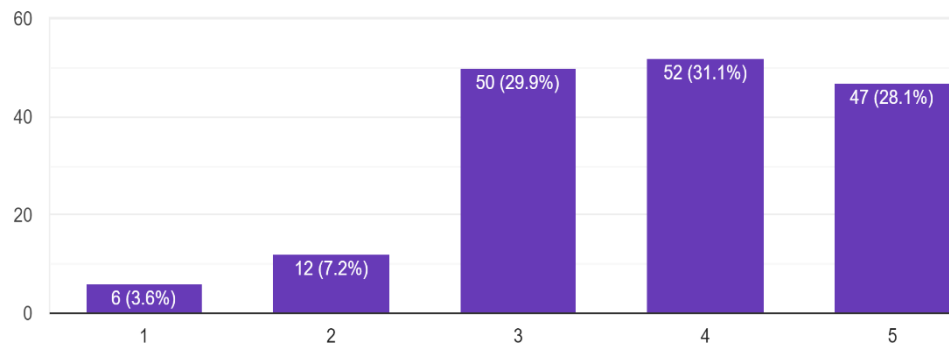


Figure 5. communication difficulty through asynchronous e-learning

In the fifth question, it is difficult to communicate with the lecturer through asynchronous e-learning, 6 students or 3.6% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 12 or 7.2% of the respondents disagree, 50 students or 29.9% of the respondents chose doubt, 52 students or 31.1% of the respondents agree, and 47 students or 28.1% of the respondents strongly agree. Based on the data above, it can be seen that more than half of students were agree with that statement which means they consider that it is quite hard conveying their opinion and asking what they do not understand directly to the lecturer and vice versa.

167 responses

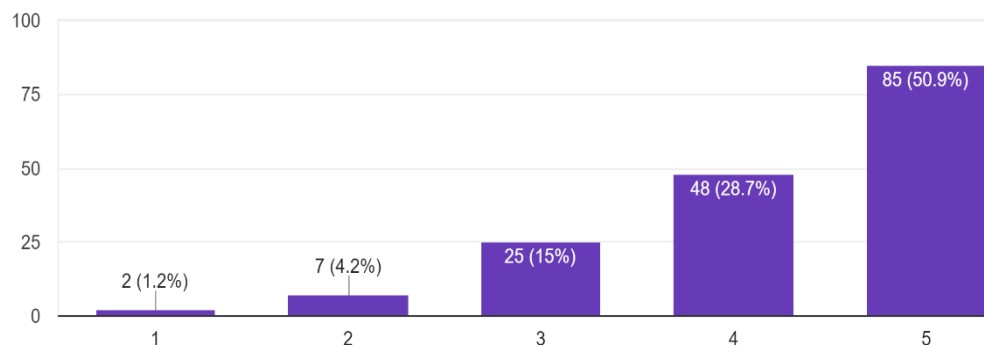


Figure 6. lecturing synchronously is interesting

In the sixth question, Lecturing synchronously is more interesting because students can directly interact with the lecturer, 2 students or 1.2% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 7 or 4.2% of the

respondents disagree, 25 students or 15% of the respondents chose doubt, 48 students or 28.7% of the respondents agree, and 85 students or 50.9% of the respondents strongly agree. It is showed that the students who agree and strongly agree are very dominant. It can obviously be assumed that most of the students, 79.6% of them prefer lecturing synchronously through video-conference and they thought it is more comfortable and interesting as they can directly ask the unclear explanation like in real class.

167 responses

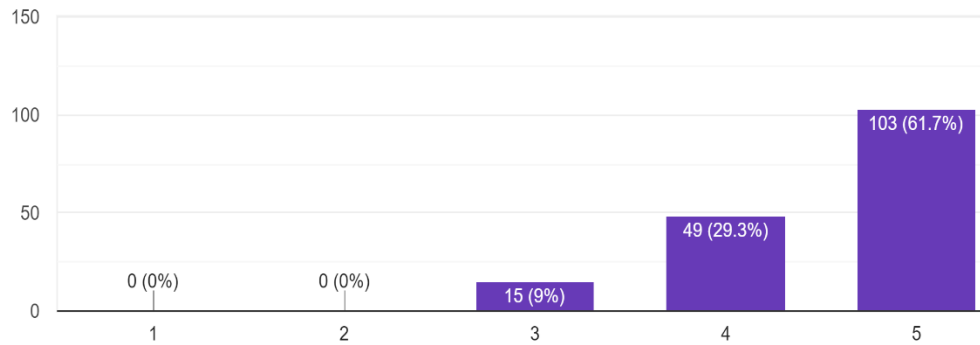


Figure 7. attending lecture on time

In the seventh question, I am always on time to attend lectures through video-conference (Synchronous), none of students chose strongly disagree and disagree, 15 students or 9% of the respondents chose doubt, 49 students or 29.3% of the respondents agree, and 103 students or 61.7% of the students strongly agree. The data showed that there were no students disagree or strongly disagreed with the statement and few students were not sure of the answer. It can be assumed that students strive to be punctual for virtual lectures synchronously through video conferencing. While more than 80% of students agree and strongly agree with timely attendance at lectures, it shows that they have high motivation and enthusiasm to attend lectures synchronously so that most students agree to be disciplined on time when lecturing.

167 responses

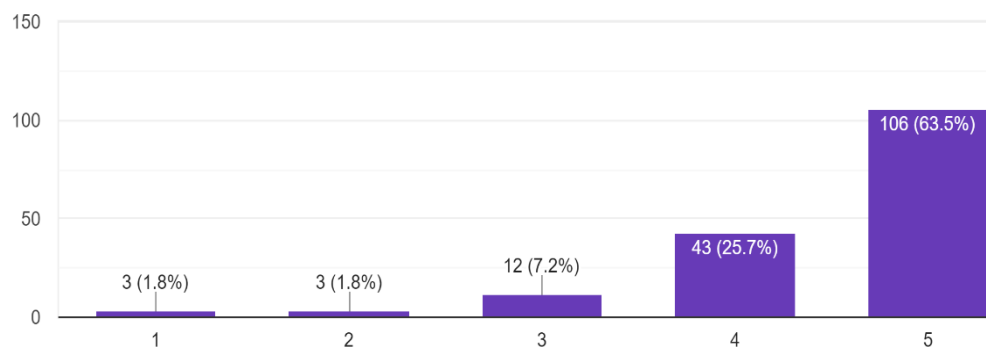


Figure 8. material in synchronous learning is easy to understand

In the eighth question, the material given synchronously is easier to understand because I can directly ask questions, 3 students or 1.8% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 3 or 1.8% of the respondents disagree, 12 students or 7.2% of the respondents chose doubt, 43 students or 25.7% of the respondents agree, and 106 students or 63.5% of the respondents strongly agree. Based on the data, it

obviously showed that most of the students, 89.2% of the respondents presumed materials given synchronously help them understand easily; this is a good and positive thing. Appropriate material, indeed, will affect the students result.

Students’ preference on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning

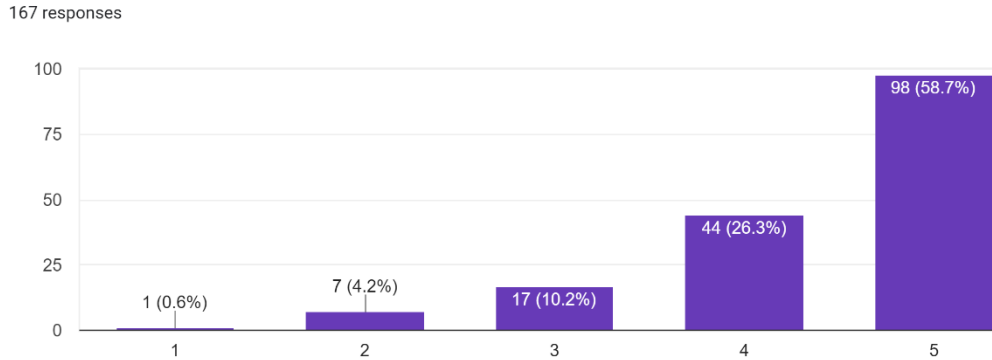


Figure 9. comparing the material

In the ninth question, I understand the material conveyed synchronously better than asynchronously, 1 student or 0.6% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 7 or 4.2% of the respondents disagree, 17 students or 10.2% of the respondents chose doubt, 44 students or 26.3% of the respondents agree, and 98 students or 58.7% of the respondents strongly agree. The data showed that 85% of the students agree with the statement, they understand material better through lecturing synchronously. In other word, the material directly conveyed by the lecturer improve student comprehension.

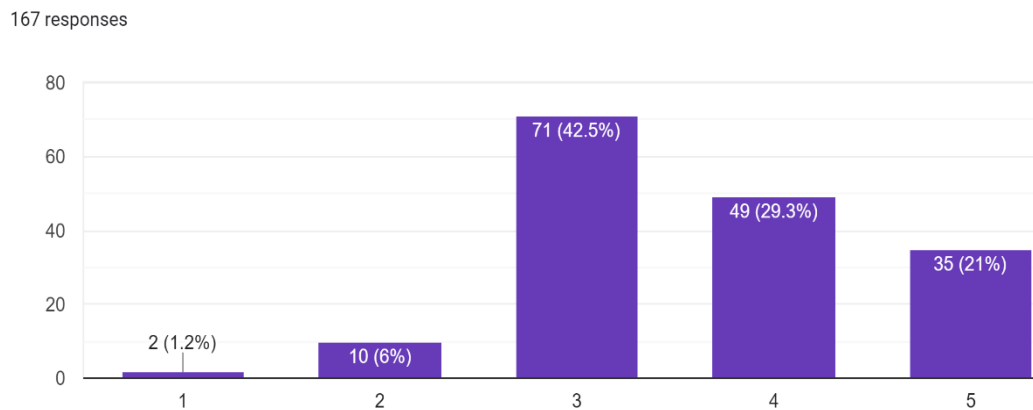


Figure 10. students prefer e-learning asynchronously

In the tenth question, I prefer e-learning asynchronously, 2 students or 1.2% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 10 or 6% of the respondents disagree, 71 students or 42.5% of the respondents chose doubt, 49 students or 29.3% of the respondents agree, and 35 students or 21% of the respondents strongly agree. In this statement, the most dominant answer is doubt; it can be assumed that students are not sure they can comprehend the material given asynchronously through LMS.

167 responses

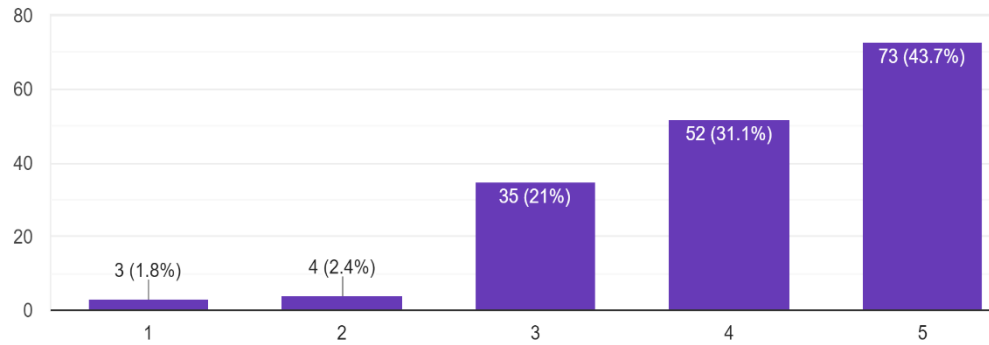


Figure 11. students prefer e-learning synchronously

In the eleventh question, I prefer e-learning synchronously, 3 students or 1.8% of the respondents chose strongly disagree, 4 or 2.4% of the respondents disagree, 35 students or 21% of the respondents chose doubt, 52 students or 31.1% of the respondents agree, and 73 students or 43.7% of the respondents strongly agree. Based on the data above, it can be seen that most of the students, 74.8% of the respondents, prefer e-learning especially in English lesson conducted synchronously.

Students' perception on the presence of lecturer in e-learning

167 responses

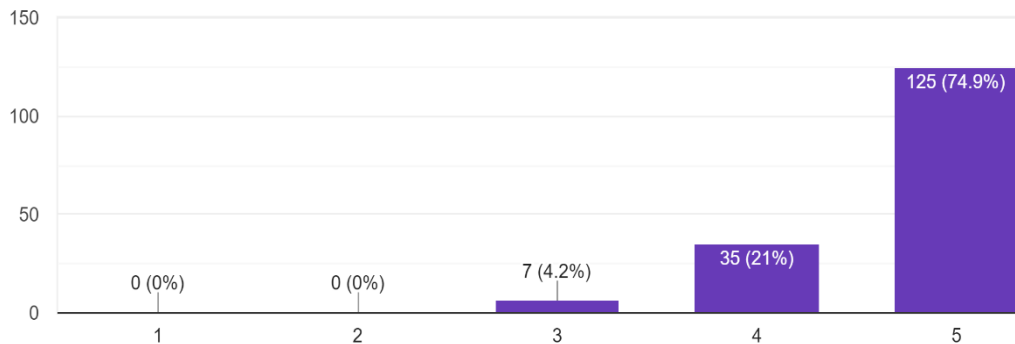


Figure 12. teacher presence is important

In the twelfth question, the presence of lecturer in e-learning is important, none of the students chose strongly disagree and disagree, 7 students or 4.2% of the respondents chose doubt, 35 students or 21% of the respondents agree, and 125 students or 74.9% of the respondents strongly agree. It is quite convincing that students presumed the lecturer presence in e-learning is very crucial, this is evidenced by the number of students who agreed and strongly agree with the statement reach 95.9%. For more details, all the statements and the frequency students answer can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. Student Perceptions

Statements	Answer Frequency					Number of responses
	SD	DA	NS	A	SA	
E-learning in ELT either synchronously or asynchronously assist learning process	1	2	30	63	71	167
Percentage (%)	0.6	1.2	18	37.7	42.5	
English lecturing asynchronously through LMS is more flexible in case of time and place.	0	2	7	52	106	167
Percentage (%)	0	1.2	4.2	31.1	63.5	
Lecturing asynchronously is more efficient in terms of internet quota.	11	18	48	44	46	167
Percentage (%)	6.6	10.8	28.7	26.3	27.5	
the material provided asynchronously (in LMS) is complete and easy to understand	0	11	55	66	35	167
Percentage (%)	0	6.6	32.9	39.5	21	
It is difficult to communicate with the lecturer through asynchronous e-learning	6	12	50	52	47	167
Percentage (%)	3.6	7.2	29.9	31.1	28.1	
Lecturing synchronously is more interesting because students can directly interact with the lecturer	2	7	25	48	85	167
Percentage (%)	1.2	4.2	15	28.7	50.9	
I am always on time to attend lectures through video-conference (Synchronous)	0	0	15	49	103	167
Percentage (%)	0	0	9	29.3	61.7	
The material given synchronously is easier to understand because I can directly ask questions	3	3	12	43	106	167
Percentage (%)	1.8	1.8	7.2	25.7	63.5	
I understand the material conveyed synchronously better than asynchronously	1	7	17	44	98	167
Percentage (%)	0.6	4.2	10.2	26.3	58.7	
I prefer e-learning asynchronously	2	10	71	49	35	167
Percentage (%)	1.2	6	42.5	29.3	21	
I prefer e-learning synchronously	3	4	35	52	73	167
Percentage (%)	1.8	2.4	21	31.1	43.7	
The presence of lecturer in e-learning is important	0	0	7	35	125	167
Percentage (%)	0	0	4.2	21	74.9	

Information:

SD: Strongly Agree

DA: Do not Agree

NS: Not Sure

A: Agree

SA: Strongly Agree

CONCLUSION

This current study was to investigate students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT. The finding shows that: First, students' perceptions on synchronous and asynchronous e-learning in ELT are generally positive; Second, the students choose synchronous lectures via video-conference as their preferred teaching learning medium because it facilitates two-way communication with lecturers; and Third, students' perceptions of the presence of lecturers during lectures shows that more than 90 percent of students consider the presence of lecturers to be very important. It can be concluded that E-learning either synchronous and asynchronous can help the students with the lesson and no matter how sophisticated the technology is, the presence of teachers is still expected by students.

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