Students' Perspectives on The Use of Nearpod for EFL Learning Context

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Abstract
Nearpod has become one of the most popular digital platforms for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) due to its wide range of interactive activities that can be customized to meet students' needs. It offers solutions to common learning challenges like limited time, space, and low motivation and creativity levels. Therefore, this study aims to examine the perceptions of high school students in Boyolali, Indonesia, regarding the use of Nearpod as a tool for EFL learning, both in the classroom and for independent study. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations. The findings indicate that students generally view Nearpod positively as a valuable learning tool. However, challenges such as unfamiliar features and poor internet connectivity were noted. In response, teachers provided solutions, mainly when the challenges arose from external factors beyond the platform.

Keywords: Digital learning tools; EFL Learning; Nearpod; Student perceptions; Qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology in the 21st century has dramatically impacted the use of digital tools, especially in the education sector. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2021) stated that technological advancements will positively contribute to the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045. The Ministry further emphasized that Indonesia has successfully integrated digital technology into education, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic (Irzawati, 2021). Many educational technologies and digital platforms have been adopted in Indonesia to support online learning and blended learning approaches.

Nearpod is one of the learning platforms that offers a variety of customizable activities to meet students' needs, including tools such as live polls, voice recordings, images, and simple gamification elements (Alawadhi & Thabet, 2023). In addition to providing diverse activities, Nearpod addresses common educational challenges such as limited time, space, motivation, and creativity (Van Le & Doan, 2023). It also aids students' comprehension of learning materials delivered by teachers, particularly in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (Ariyani & Nurkhamidah, 2023). Nearpod is regarded as suitable and aligned with the curriculum in Indonesia's English language learning context. Both teachers and students believe that Nearpod is a valuable tool that enhances the learning

experience and allows for instructional customization based on students' needs (Hilmi et al., 2024). While numerous studies have concentrated on using Nearpod in EFL classrooms, limited research explores its implementation in both online and offline settings. Therefore, this study aims to investigate and answer the following research questions:

1. What are Indonesian senior high school students' perceptions of using Nearpod for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)?
2. What challenges do Indonesian senior high school students face when using Nearpod for EFL learning?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Student Perceptions
Definition

Perception is a psychological process that involves receiving stimuli through the five senses and processing them to produce sensory awareness. It is closely related to sight, hearing, taste, smell, and surrounding circumstances over time (Abidin & Suryani, 2021; Walgito, 2010). Student perception refers to how students think, believe, and feel about the environment they experience, including people, situations, and events. In other words, perception can be defined as the students' sensory impression of how classroom activities and learning experiences affect them (Schunk, 2009; Zielińska et al., 2024).

Components

Perception is a subjective process influenced by various external stimuli. However, not all stimuli are received equally; individuals tend to filter and select stimuli based on what they find appealing or relevant (Walgito, 2010; Yeni & Syahrul, 2021). Therefore, perception can be analyzed through three primary aspects: cognitive, affective, and conative (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Tewal et al., 2019; Walgito, 2010). The components of perception consist of the following:

a. Cognitive: This component involves knowledge, views, expectations, beliefs, thought processes, and experiences that reflect how an individual forms perceptions through thinking and reasoning.
b. Affective: This component refers to an individual's emotional response or feelings, which influence how they perceive something as good or bad based on their emotional state.
c. Conative: This component relates to an individual's attitude or behavior toward a situation, including their motivation and personal condition, as they form a perception.

Indicators

An individual receives messages through perception, which are then organized, interpreted, and assessed to construct meaning from their surroundings. Therefore, the indicators of perception are identified into three main stages: absorption/acceptance, comprehension, and evaluation (Robbins, 2013; Walgito, 2010), as described below:

a. Absorption: Absorption refers to the psychological process of receiving stimuli through the five senses. It is the initial stage where individuals are exposed to external information.
b. Comprehension: Comprehension refers to how the brain organizes, classifies, and compares the information with prior knowledge or mental images to construct understanding.
c. Evaluation: Evaluation assigns meaning and interpretation based on personal assumptions and subjective criteria developed by the individual.

Factors

Stimuli can be perceived differently by each individual. These differing responses to stimuli are influenced by both internal and external factors (Thoha, 2003). Internal factors typically arise from an individual's characteristics, which include attitudes, motives, interests, experiences, and expectations. On the other hand, external factors refer to elements outside the individual, such as the nature of the perceptual target or object. These may include novelty, sound, size, background, and other observable features. In addition, external factors can also be shaped by the situational context in which the perception occurs, such as location, timing, and social context (Robbins, 2013).

Nearpod
Definition

Nearpod is a digital learning platform that offers numerous learning variations, including interactive activities, quizzes, polls, basic gamification, interactive video, whiteboards, and collaborative boards (Sarginson & McPherson, 2021). This educational tool can enhance student motivation and engagement during lessons. Researchers indicate that when Nearpod is used as a learning tool, students feel more comfortable and satisfied with their learning experience (Ningsih, 2003; Rios-Zaruma et al., 2019).

Advantages and Disadvantages

Nearpod has been recognized as a platform that can enhance learning effectiveness. Many students appear more engaged in classroom activities after integrating Nearpod into their studies. This boost in student participation can be attributed to a feature in Nearpod that allows students to view their friends' work and scores, thereby increasing their motivation (Abdullah et al., 2022). Additionally, Nearpod features gamified elements that can further enhance student motivation and promote positive learning habits (Hamari et al., 2014). With these benefits, Nearpod is categorized as a top-rated education platform (Mirzaev, 2022). The advantages that can be seen from Nearpod are:
1. Interactive presentations, allowing teachers to upload and deliver content that students can engage with in real time.
2. Multimedia resources, enabling the integration of various media types to enrich the learning experience.

3. Online assessments, including simple gamification elements such as polls, open-ended questions, matching pairs, and "Time to Climb," which facilitate immediate teacher feedback.
4. Efficient evaluation, helping teachers save time during lessons.
5. Collaborative whiteboard: Provide a shared digital space for students and teachers to interact and visualize content.

However, besides its advantages, Nearpod also has some limitations. The limitations may come from within the Nearpod or outside the Nearpod, which impacts learning. Different Nearpod regulations in each country cause some countries, including Indonesia, to use manual mode, which results in more restricted use (Abdullah et al., 2022). Some of Nearpod's limitations can cause several challenges, such as:

1. Device constraints: Students may encounter challenges when their devices do not meet the standard requirements that Nearpod sets for accessing its platform. Nearpod relies on significant storage for its learning activities, so a stable connection from students' devices is essential for effective learning.
2. Storage limitations: This also applies to teachers, who have limited storage to upload videos or files, which limits the content that can be shared with students.

Review on the Use in EFL Classroom

Nearpod plays an important role in EFL learning by giving students access to materials that can be accessed through their own devices. With this access, students can learn English anywhere and anytime through flexible learning. In addition, Nearpod also provides a learning presentation based on the application of English, a real-world context, with the features provided. Game-based learning in the form of Time to Climb increases students' motivation and participation in EFL classes (Mirzaev, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method, which allows researchers to observe and understand participants' daily life experiences in a natural setting (Yin, 2011). Specifically, a case study approach was chosen, as it enables an in-depth exploration of individuals' subjective perspectives, including their thoughts, feelings, and desires, within a specific context (Bromley, 1986; Platt, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). This approach is suitable for the present study, which aims to explore students' perceptions of using Nearpod as a learning tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

The data were collected from 10th-grade students at a senior high school in Boyolali, Indonesia, through classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews. Random sampling was conducted to ensure that every student had an equal opportunity to share their perceptions of EFL learning using Nearpod (Creswell, 2017). The random sampling technique was applied by selecting participants from a class of 36 students to ensure equal opportunities for student participation in expressing their perceptions. Random sampling was also appropriate due to the zoning system implemented in the school, which ensures that there are no "favorite" or specialized classes. The collected data were analyzed using Miles and

Huberman's (2014) interactive model, which involves three key steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of a case study conducted in a senior high school class in Boyolali, Indonesia, with 36 students participating. The researcher collected data through questionnaires, interviews, and observations made during the lessons. Of the 36 students who completed the questionnaire, the researcher employed random sampling to gather the interview results. Random sampling was chosen because the studied school has a zoning system and does not offer exceptional or favored classes, ensuring that all students in the class have an equal academic level. Additionally, random sampling was implemented so that all students had equal opportunities to express their perceptions. Therefore, this study aims to (1) explore how students perceive Nearpod in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, and (2) identify the challenges students face when using Nearpod in EFL learning.

1. Students' Perceptions of Nearpod in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning

The findings indicate that students positively perceive Nearpod in the context of EFL learning. Students demonstrated a generally positive perception of using Nearpod in EFL learning. As shown in Table 1, 54% of respondents agreed with the positively worded items in the questionnaire. This aligns with the results of items 1–4, which reflect the cognitive aspect of perception. Most (55%) of students reported that Nearpod enhanced their comprehension of English. They attributed this improvement to the platform's accessible and supportive features, which enabled them to engage in independent learning and access content relevant to their academic needs. Most students (56%) also expressed positive affective perceptions toward using Nearpod, reflecting their feelings and emotional responses. Items 5–8 of the questionnaire indicated that students enjoyed using Nearpod in EFL learning. Furthermore, they perceived that Nearpod was well-supported by the existing school facilities. Students also appreciated the interactive features that enabled collaboration with peers and reported that using Nearpod helped reduce their anxiety in preparing for English assessments. Students' conative perceptions toward using Nearpod were also predominantly positive (52%). Questionnaire items 9–12 revealed noticeable changes in students' behaviors and attitudes following their engagement with Nearpod in EFL learning. Many students agreed that they had recommended Nearpod to their peers as a helpful tool for learning English. They also preferred completing exercises on Nearpod over traditional paper-based tasks, finding it more enjoyable and less distracting despite notifications on their mobile devices. Moreover, a significant proportion of students (64%) strongly agreed that Nearpod fostered their competitive spirit, motivating them to perform better in English.

Table 1. Result of the Questionnaire

Result of the Questionnaire
On Students' Perception of Using Nearpod for EFL Learning

Questions	SA	A	D	SD
I feel that my understanding of English has improved after using Nearpod	41.7%	55.6%	2.8%	-
I do not find it challenging to use Nearpod features to support my English learning	33.3%	63.9%	2.8%	-
I hope that Nearpod can facilitate my independent English learning	38.9%	55.6%	5.6%	-
I believe that Nearpod provides English learning materials that meet my needs	52.8%	44.4%	2.8%	-
I enjoy how Nearpod is used in English language learning	41.7%	55.6%	2.8%	-
I feel that Nearpod is compatible with the facilities available at school	38.9%	52.8%	8,3%	-
I enjoy interacting with my peers through Nearpod	47.2%	50%	2.8%	-
I feel that Nearpod reduces my anxiety when facing English exams	27.8%	66.7%	2.8%	2.8%
I often recommend Nearpod to my friends for learning English	19.4%	69.4%	11.1%	-
I prefer doing exercises on Nearpod rather than on paper	38.9%	55.6%	2.8%	2.8%
I believe that Nearpod helps reduce distractions from my phone during study sessions	36.1%	55.6%	8.3%	-
I feel that my competitive spirit to improve my grades has increased after using Nearpod	63.9%	27.8%	5.6%	2.8%

Note: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

The researcher collected data through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, which were then used to validate the students' responses. The researcher categorized the students' cognitive, affective, and conative perceptions. In the cognitive aspect, students perceived Nearpod as a tool that enhanced their understanding of English. Interview data revealed that students expressed improved comprehension, as reflected in one student's statement: *"I understand better because there are many features that suit us when learning English."* This finding aligns with the researcher's classroom observation, which showed that students could follow the teacher's instructions more easily and without confusion. Both the observations and questionnaire responses also indicated that students perceived Nearpod as meeting their individual learning needs. In the affective aspect, the study focused on students' perceptions of emotions and feelings during their engagement with Nearpod. During interviews, students expressed enjoyment of Nearpod. One student remarked, *"It is delightful because the slides can be adjusted based on our needs. The use of various colors helps avoid drowsiness and prevents monotonous learning."* The researcher also observed that students actively interacted with their peers through Nearpod, such as by dividing tasks and providing peer feedback. In addition, observations showed that students utilized the interactive features in the Nearpod to provide feedback to their friends. The conative aspect also showed that Nearpod impacted students' behavior and attitude. In the interview, the student stated, "*One*

time, my friend asked where we should study from, and I told them just to use Nearpod because it provides many practice activities." Then the teacher responded that the teacher provides student learning tools through student-paced tools that allow students to access and share them anytime. The research then also added that in the conative aspect, one of the student behaviors, students are also more focused on their mobile phones to use Nearpod and not distracted by other things outside of learning.

2. Challenges Students Face when Using Nearpod for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning

From the interview data, students reported encountering challenges while using Nearpod, including: (1) the difficulty of using certain features and (2) weak connections on their devices. They noted that when a new feature is introduced in class, they need time to learn its functions before proceeding with the lesson. Additionally, the poor connection often delays their Nearpod experience, causing students to worry about falling behind their peers when friends advance to the following material.

However, with these challenges, there are solutions provided by teachers and schools. First, teachers guide students to use Nearpod by using it not only once but in several meetings. Nearpod, which cannot be fully accessed in one meeting, especially for students unfamiliar with technology, will be applied with regular habituation. So that students can also utilize Nearpod as a technology that can support their learning. Second, teachers add the duration for accessing Nearpod for students with connection issues. Teachers ensure that the class will not be left behind. The teacher also added that with the implementation of technology, the school added speed in internet access through wi-fi in each class.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher analyzes the data presented in the findings regarding students' perceptions of using Nearpod for EFL learning. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, emphasizing the importance of understanding how students think, believe, and feel about their learning experiences and classroom activities (Schunk, 2009; Zielińska et al., 2024).

The findings revealed that, in terms of cognitive perception, students felt their understanding improved when Nearpod was implemented. This aligns with the study by Ariyani and Nurkhamidah (2023), which found that Nearpod helps enhance instructional materials' delivery. Similarly, Hilmi et al. (2024) concluded that Nearpod improves comprehension due to its features, which can be tailored to students' needs. In the affective aspect, data from the findings indicated that students enjoyed using Nearpod in class and engaging in peer interactions. This aligns with the study conducted by Alawadhi and Thabet (2019), which stated that Nearpod increases student engagement and enhances their learning experience. Regarding the conative aspect, the findings showed that students preferred Nearpod as a suitable application because it helped reduce distractions commonly caused by mobile phones. This supports the study by Tran et al. (2023), which found that

Nearpod increases student focus and minimizes distractions from social media or games, as students' attention is centered on the Nearpod platform.

The findings also showed that, despite students' positive perceptions of Nearpod, they encountered several challenges. Some students found certain features unfamiliar, which were considered complex and required time to understand. These difficulties were often addressed through teacher guidance and repeated practice. The teacher helped students become more familiar with the platform by using it regularly in class. This supports Mirzaev (2022), who discovered that students can learn to use Nearpod independently through consistent exposure. Another common issue was a poor internet connection, which caused delays in accessing content and made some students feel left behind during lessons. This challenge aligns with Abdullah et al. (2022), who noted that Nearpod requires a strong internet connection and adequate device storage. To address this, the teacher adjusted the timing of the lessons and provided extra time to students who experienced delays. This reflects Tran et al. (2023), who emphasized that teachers should adapt digital platforms like Nearpod to meet students' needs and learning conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the questionnaire results confirmed by interview and the researcher's observation, students positively perceived using Nearpod as a learning tool in English classrooms. They viewed Nearpod as an effective method to enhance their understanding of English through its supportive features. These features reduce boredom during lessons, increase students' competitive drive for achieving better scores, and lessen excessive anxiety. In addition, Nearpod provided a flexible and accessible learning platform that allowed students to study independently and meet their learning needs in English. Although challenges emerged not only from Nearpod itself, such as unfamiliar features or weak internet connections, these issues could be addressed through consistent use and familiarization. Moreover, teachers play a crucial role in adapting Nearpod to suit students' conditions inside and outside the classroom. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Nearpod offers a potential solution to various classroom challenges, particularly in the context of EFL learning. Students can utilize Nearpod as a classroom learning platform and a tool for independent study.

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