CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this study. It consists of background of the research, research questions, research objectives, scope of the research, significance of research, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Research

The use of technology in all areas of life has led to its growing presence in educational settings. It has more impacts to students' achievement in learning. It offers the students with more opportunities to be more engaged in their learning process because it provides an affordable access to the sources and information (Floris, 2014). Students are able to find authentic resources related to the students' need as well as to work their task on their own pace. There has been an increasing number of studies that have been done that the outcomes of technology enhance education environment to create better quality of teaching and learning and it impacts on students' engagement (Hermans et al., 2008; Tamim et al., 2011; Voogt, Knezek, & Roblin; 2015). In addition, technology has positive effects on students' motivation (Mahdizadeh, Biemans, & Mulder, 2008), autonomy (Claudia, Steil, & Todesco, 2004), and deep learning and broader skills of 4Cs including creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Markauskaite, 2007).

The ability to incorporate the technology is imperative for today's classroom. Teachers are expected to support their students with the technology because it is a demand for students' need in this present era. Taylor and Parsons (2011) argued the students in this present era have changed from the previous era especially in the usage of technology. They are the digital natives who were born in the years of rich technology. They also lived in the digital era when the technological tools are widely used in their daily life. Consequently, they take the opportunities to have more interactions with technologies as their most dominant source of stimulation in their learning.

Students need some varieties of learning environments which can be supported by using the technology. Some recent studies highlight the importance of technology as it can enhance learning in the form of modeling, coaching, and scaffolding. Facilitating students by using the technology brings great benefits toward students' learning outcomes (Mith, Smith & Craig, 2013). It cannot be denied that the use of technology has become necessary in the teaching and learning process. Technology is an important resource used in many classrooms with the purpose of enhancing instruction (Espinosa, 2015).

Furthermore, students tend to be bored by lectures in class and prefer to go online with the technology. As Brown (2006) pointed out, students in this era are engaged in the learning differently than earlier generations did. He added that students tend to be intrinsically motivated and try to satisfy their curiosity in their ways. Teacher could not expect the students to just sit down in the class listening to teachers and lessons, instead they multitask and do things simultaneously in their brain like listening to music while surfing the web or reading information. They dominantly have an interest in using technology and need to use technology in and out of the classroom. They always like to access all information with their own devices. Therefore, enhancing students' learning performance supported by technology is very urgent to meet with the students' need and interest.

Incorporating technology also can enhance the quality of teaching for the teachers. It can increase teacher's efficiency and quality in delivering the learning material at the classroom (Wu, Pan, & Yuan, 2016). Many kinds of technologies can be implemented in the teaching and learning process such as the use of website to help students searching more materials and supporting teachers in preparing the learning materials. Therefore, it will be one of the needs for the teachers in using technology in their teaching. They need to improve their teaching skills and classroom management practices by implementing the relevant technology in their classroom.

The most popular technology in learning which is capable of solving multiple tasks, is blended learning which is often thought as a way how both educators and students can meet their teaching and learning needs (Nafukho, 2015). This technology is profoundly transforming education, training and

learning, while engaging and motivating students all over the world. Hence, blended learning may be able to take the best from two forms of teaching combining effective face-to-face teaching techniques with the online interactive collaboration.

Blended learning is a considerably supreme learning approach that offers several facilities for both teachers and students. Blended learning is a structured opportunity to learn, using more than one learning method, carried out inside or outside the classroom and supported by technology and traditional methods (Akkooyunlu & Soylu, 2008). Meanwhile, Khandve and Shelke (2016) stated that blended learning is creating a mix both of offline and online learning experiences in one way that they complement each other. Hence, blended learning is called as the way that combines online and face-to-face instruction to maximize both online and offline learning.

Blended learning gives effective instructions because it combines teacher's instruction directly in face to face classroom and technology tools which students have been familiar with. Wang, Shen, Novak, and Pan (2009) stressed that blended learning enables students to become more active in learning because blended learning can foster higher students' involvement. In addition, in the opportunity creating students' habit of using ICT to boost students' learning, Cooner (2010) argued that blended learning is able to improve students' learning experience by all activities in each learning process. A mix of offline and online learning environment has huge potential to alter how students engage as learners in the classroom (Bolstad et al., 2012).

Previous findings from various educational researchers confirmed that students' engagement in learning is an important construct for learning and personal development of the students (Ginns & Ellis, 2007). A study on student engagement is needed because students' level of engagement is one of important factors for students' learning. Students' low engagement is considered the main reason for dissatisfaction; negative experience and dropping out of university courses in some previous research studies (Greenwood, Horton & Utley, 2002). Seymour and Hewitt (1997) showed that many students who drop out from university courses or programs are not because they are weak or stupid students

but because they are not engaged and feel dissatisfaction with their learning process. It is identified that the effort to increase student engagement with learning material and improving student satisfaction with the course has been an important goal for universities and teachers in delivering material.

Designing learning environment and utilization of technology in teaching practice is one of solutions to reduce the negative cases happened in the educational environment. It is expected improving student learning effectively. The combination of face-to-face and online learning called blended learning has the potential to provide an interesting learning environment where student engagement opportunities are more than using only one type of learning environment but it uses a combination between of face-to- face and online learning by integrating the technology in the classroom (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

Bakele and Menchaca (2008) identified many studies that revealed positive influences of blended learning on (1) student performance (Ladyshewsky, 2004); (2) student participation and motivation (Ugur, Akkoyunlu & Kurbanoglu, 2011); (3) increased access and flexibility (Macedo-Rouet, Ney, Charles & Lallich-Boidin, 2009); (4) cost-effectiveness (Herman & Banister, 2007); and (5) more active and deeper learning (Bonk, Kim & Zeng, 2006; Cooner, 2010) in comparison with traditional classes (Donnely, 2010). Those many reviews of research in blended learning have showed that blended learning has the capability to support more effective in the learning process and enhance students' engagement in their learning.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that the new technology used in teaching and learning process enhances the performance of students. It increases the collaboration among the students. More information can be gathered by using technology and sharing of information can be done not only within the university but across the world. The flexibility and accessibility of blended learning make it more interesting. Current generation of students who were born with the internet network, and now they are experiencing the transition from the old to the new web-based technology. They need to use blended learning in their learning. The development of blended learning in the university is still at its initial stage.

A great deal of technological change has utilized for more than ten years, but there are few studies that examine students' engagement in blended learning context. While there is research into teaching using blended learning instruction, yet little is known about the nature of blended learning activities in facilitating engagement (Delialighou, 2012). The context of blended learning in high education needs to be analyzed on how the students are engaged in blended learning instruction. Based on those considerations, this study investigated students' engagement in a blended learning instruction with a case study at a university in Surakarta, Central Java.

1.2 Research Questions

The research attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of engagement are presented in a blended learning instruction in an Integrated English course?
2. How do students engage in the learning activities?

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims at:

1. Identifying kinds of engagement presented in a blended learning instruction in an Integrated English course.
2. Investigating how students engage in the learning activities.

1.4 Scope of the Research

Employing a case study, the research was done in a university located in Surakarta involving one class of fourth semester students who take Integrated English course. In this research, the researcher involved as an observer in the classroom. Data collections to build powerful sources obtained from classroom observations and interviews. In addition, the researcher also took some documents from the online classroom in Google Classroom for supporting the data. The coverage of this study is the undergraduate students' engagement in a blended learning instruction in Integrated English course. The research is to explore what kinds of student engagement presented in a blended learning instruction in terms of behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement and to investigate how students performed their engagement in learning Integrated English course in a blended learning instruction.

1.5 Significance of Research

  This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits.

1. Theoretical benefits

  The results of this research are expected to enrich the theories of blended learning context in Indonesia especially in student engagement during the classroom activities in an EFL context. The findings of this research may be used as one of the references for the next investigation about students' engagement in a blended learning instruction.

2. Practical benefits

  The results of this research revealed what are the strengths and weaknesses of the blended learning instruction investigated in term of its appropriateness and effectiveness in an EFL teaching and learning process. The findings of this research furthermore are expected to help teachers to choose the appropriate technology to be integrated in teaching and learning nowadays. Teachers also may be able to identify and evaluate kinds of technology are useful or useless to their teaching practice based on students' interest and need.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

  Clarifying the key terms used in the presentation of this research is important to the intention of having a similar understanding of them throughout. The following are the definitions of those terms.

1. Student engagement is the quality and quantity of student's cognitive, behavioral, and emotional reactions to the learning process in or out the class including academic and social activities to achieve successful learning outcomes (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2014).

2. Blended learning is a method to find a harmonious balance between online learning and face-to-face human interaction to achieve the successful learning outcomes (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

3. Behavioral engagement is defined as the positive participation in learning tasks and involves doing the work and following the rules (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004).

4. Cognitive engagement is where students are strategic, invested, challenged, motivated and independent to self-regulate their learning (Fredricks et al., 2004).

5. Emotional engagement involves reactions such as enjoyment, a sense of belonging, interest and is about being connected to the learning and the learning environment (Fredricks et al., 2004).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is introduction. Following this Chapter I is Chapter II, which presents the terms of blended learning and student engagement. The first term is blended learning which explains more about definition of blended learning, blended learning procedure, characteristics of blended learning, and benefits of blended learning. The second term is student engagement which presents the definition of student engagement, dimensions of student engagement, characteristics of engaged student, supporting student engagement, benefits of being engaged in the learning process, student engagement in a blended learning instruction and related studies. Chapter III discusses research methodology that includes research design, research site, research participants, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and trustworthiness of this study. Chapter IV presents findings and discussion of the research. Chapter V is conclusion, implications, limitation of the study and recommendations drawn from the emerging findings.