

## Student's Perceptions in Virtual Learning-based Instructions in Learning English Reading at Southwest Papua EFL Classroom

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate how the students perceive the virtual learning-based instructions in learning English reading in Southwest Papua EFL Classroom, how the students implement the virtual learning-based instructions in learning English reading in Southwest Papua EFL classroom, how the students engage the virtual learning-based instruction in learning English reading in Southwest Papua EFL classroom, how do the virtual learning-based instructions in learning English reading impact attaining the intended learning outcomes, and what are the challenges the students face during the virtual learning-based instructions in learning English reading in Southwest Papua EFL classroom. To achieve these goals, this study was conducted at UNIMUDA Sorong by applying virtual learning to collect data offline and online. The researcher collected the research data from 20 students who were recruited using a convenient sampling technique. The qualitative data gained was then analyzed thematically and it was revealed that the students believe that using virtual learning can greatly help them learn English reading. They find it useful, and easy to use and have a positive attitude toward its use. From this result, it is claimed academically that the higher the students' perception of the value of VL-LER in enhancing Papua EFL classroom, the more proficiently students incorporate VL-LER in learning Reading.*

**Keywords:** Students' perceptions; Virtual Learning; Southwest Papua; EFL Classroom.

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia, boasting a population of 260 million, stands as the fourth most populous nation globally and is an emerging force in Southeast Asia. The prevalence of English in the country is notable, as highlighted (Usman, 2019). As English gains increasing significance in Indonesia, the younger generation, who previously pursued it as a foreign language for academic and communicative purposes, now find themselves driven by new motivations and requirements, as pointed out (Kurniasih and Subyantoro, 2020). Today, the pursuit of English proficiency is closely intertwined with globalization, given the nation's economic aspirations to compete effectively on the international stage.

The advent of technology-driven education, commonly referred to as virtual learning, has transformed teaching and learning methodologies significantly (Asmirah et al., 2023). Computer-assisted language learning and mobile-assisted language learning have emerged as firmly established and recognized approaches within the educational landscape, as outlined (Dantes et al., 2019). Concurrently, online education places considerable emphasis on addressing students' needs through clear objectives, appropriate guidelines, and effective methods for conducting both

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synchronous and asynchronous learning sessions. Generally, the effectiveness of online education hinges on three pivotal factors: technology integration, instructional strategies, and student engagement, as highlighted (Martin et al., 2020).

Given that students are the central focus of the learning process, the effectiveness of online education is contingent upon their attitudes and behaviors. As noted, (Tosun, 2015), under the guidance and supervision of educators, online learning offers students greater autonomy in determining how, when, and what they learn (Iskandar et al., 2023). Positive perceptions of student engagement in group activities, discussions, and responses to reflective questions serve as indicators of motivation and adherence to self-regulated learning principles. Moreover, (Miller and Edward, 2020) underscore that online resources supplement traditional schooling, enabling students to explore additional educational materials, engage in homeschooling, support peers unable to attend physical classes, and pursue studies remotely, accommodating those who may have discontinued formal education (Bahtiar et al., 2021).

In remote teaching, one of the English skills addressed is reading comprehension, which entails readers grasping the meaning and content of the text they are reading. As highlighted (Dewi et al., 2020), reading comprehension occurs when readers discern the significance and message conveyed within the text. Furthermore, (Elleman and Oslund, 2019) argue that reading comprehension is recognized as the most intricate cognitive activity due to the interactive nature and engagement required between the reader and the text to comprehend its meaning.

In the English Education program's second semester at the Faculty of Language Education, UNIMUDA Sorong, Southwest Papua, Indonesia, it has been observed that students' reading comprehension remains significantly low. This observation stems from the researcher's assessment of their reading and comprehension abilities during the initial semester. This circumstance is noteworthy as it indicates a particular case within the Language Education curriculum where reading proficiency remains underdeveloped. Particularly during the challenges posed by distance learning, notably amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, students appear to overlook the significance of strong reading skills for academic success. Consequently, instructors are compelled to employ teaching methodologies that can effectively engage and motivate students in virtual environments to enhance their reading comprehension abilities.

Our ability to gather information from the environment is facilitated by sensory organs such as the eye, ear, and nose. Each sensory organ contributes to a sensory system responsible for receiving inputs and transmitting sensory data to the brain, as outlined (Guyton and Hall, 2020). A significant challenge for psychologists lies in elucidating how the physical energy detected by these sensory organs translates into perceptual experiences. These sensory inputs transform perceptions encompassing various objects and phenomena, including desks, computers, flowers, buildings, cars, and planes, as well as sensory experiences like sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. A prominent theoretical debate among psychologists revolves around the degree to which perception is directly influenced by the information contained within the stimulus itself, as discussed (Goldstein, 2019). Some argue that perceptual processes are not entirely direct but are influenced by the perceiver's expectations, prior knowledge, and the available stimulus information. This controversy is exemplified in the theories proposed (Gibson, 1966), who presents a direct theory of perception, often termed as a 'bottom-up' approach, as well as a constructivist or indirect theory of perception, described as a 'top-down' approach.

## 2. Literature review

### a. Virtual Learning

(Moore and Kearsley, 2011) distinguished between distance learning, online learning, and e-learning, acknowledging the challenge of defining and reconciling various interpretations of online learning due to differing perspectives. They noted that many researchers consider online learning as a form of education utilizing technology to access learning experiences (Benson, 2002; Conrad, 2002). Furthermore, online learning is often seen as an evolution of distance learning, offering enhanced flexibility, interactivity, and connectivity in the learning process (Ally, 2004; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005).

For this study, the term "virtual learning" is defined as educational activities and classroom instructions conducted over the Internet in virtual environments, aiming to facilitate connectivity, flexibility, and interactivity for both students and instructors (Clark, 2001). The implementation of study-from-home or virtual learning programs was initiated as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic by the Minister of Education and Culture (Yuliejantiningih, 2020). Various types of online learning solutions have been developed to cater to the diverse needs of modern learners in the digital age.

### b. English Reading

Reading holds significant importance across various settings, particularly in educational contexts (Grabe, 2009). In the realm of English education, enhancing reading comprehension entails improving students' understanding of texts and integrating new ideas gleaned from them (Silberstein, 1994). Silberstein elucidates that reading is a multifaceted information-processing skill wherein the reader engages with the text to construct or reconstruct meaningful discourse, highlighting reading as an interactive process aimed at extracting information from the text.

Several rationales underscore the importance of fostering reading skills among students, particularly in English. (Harmer, 1998) outlines these reasons, emphasizing the following points:

#### 1. Reading gives many exposures to students' language acquisition

Through the act of reading, individuals naturally acquire new vocabulary and grasp grammatical structures while deciphering the meaning of words within contextual frameworks. Exposure to diverse texts provides them with a wide array of linguistic inputs, enabling them to repeatedly encounter and effortlessly retain these linguistic elements.

#### 2. Reading texts provide a good model for English

Providing students with exemplary text models is crucial in English teaching as it aids in their recognition of phrase, clause, and sentence patterns within the text. Before reading, proficient readers typically establish reading goals, take note of the text's structure or organization, and often mentally outline it to ascertain its relevance to their objectives (Daga et al, 2024). Reading fluency plays a pivotal role in comprehension, as individuals who expend their efforts decoding words may lose track of the content's meaning. Hence, a primary objective of reading comprehension instruction is to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences to become

proficient and enthusiastic readers.

Furthermore, (Harrison, 2004) contends that reading's significance extends beyond knowledge acquisition; it is intertwined with individuals' cognitive capacities, fostering emotional, moral, and verbal intelligence, thus influencing their character development. (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998) underscore the importance of learning to read, asserting that it facilitates language acquisition, enhances vocabulary, promotes comfort with written English, and facilitates planning for study in English-speaking nations. Reading not only enhances reading proficiency but also augments various other skills, prompting readers to recognize its value in acquiring knowledge.

### 3. Research methods

The present study adopts a qualitative research approach. Theoretically, as outlined by (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998) in (Banfield & Cayago-Gicain, 2006), qualitative research is distinguished by five key characteristics. These include its occurrence in naturalistic settings, reliance on descriptive data, consideration of processes, utilization of inductive data analysis methods, and interpretation of study meanings based on subject perspectives.

Qualitative research is deemed suitable as it facilitates thorough examination of a problem or topic, enabling a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the subject (Cresswell, 2014). The selected qualitative design considers authentic contextual settings, providing valuable insights into social behaviors and thoughts, while also recognizing diverse data sources (Yin, 2015).

The researcher utilized a case study design, aiming to gather comprehensive and in-depth information from the natural setting. Case studies, as a form of qualitative research, offer valuable insights into the behavioral patterns of both lecturers and students. (Miniciello et al., 2008) distinguished between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, highlighting that qualitative research seeks to capture individuals' meanings, definitions, and event descriptions, whereas quantitative research focuses on quantification and measurement (Abduh et al., 2024).

Data collection involved virtual interviews, virtual participation observation, and document analysis, each subjected to distinct analytical approaches. Virtual observation data was organized, coded, and analyzed according to (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and (Creswell & Creswell's, 2018) procedures, encompassing data organization, coding, description and theme generation, narrative utilization, and interpretation. Virtual interviews underwent thematic analysis, following (Braun & Clarke's, 2006) six-phase framework, including data familiarization, initial code generation, theme exploration, theme review, theme definition and naming, and report production. Document analysis, as guided (by Bowen, 2017) and (Yin, 2018), involved examining written or digital documents to extract empirical knowledge and meaning. Content analysis techniques such as skimming, reading, and interpretation were employed to categorize and synthesize data extracted from documents relevant to the research topic.

### 4. Result and Discussion

#### a. Result

The researcher assumed that perception of students toward the implementation of Virtual Learning based instruction in learning reading in Southwest Papua EFL Classroom subject is very important thing since this perspective would the lecturers recognize as

well as measure how far the learning process run well flexibly, effectively dan efficiently. It was believed that those perceptions of students portrayed the implementation of Virtual Learning instructions in the English reading learning process.

The table presented below illustrates the findings of a descriptive analysis regarding students' perceptions of the effectiveness of virtual learning-based instruction for English Reading in EFL classrooms in Southwest Papua.

Table 1. Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Virtual Learning Instruction in Learning English Reading

| Informant | Statements                                                                                                                                                                                         | Extract |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| S1        | <i>"Ia memadai karena tidak langsung ke kampus tidak butuh waktu yang lebih banyak langsung di rumah saja langsung tatap muka secara online."</i>                                                  | 01      |
|           | adequate because it doesn't go directly to campus. It doesn't take longer to stay at home, directly face to face online."                                                                          |         |
| S3        | <i>"Pendapat saya mengikuti zoom dan LMS sangat baik karena kita bisa akses itu dimanapun, kapanpun, di rumah bisa, di kampus bisa."</i>                                                           | 02      |
|           | "In my opinion, following Zoom and LMS is very good because we can access it anywhere, anytime, we can at home, we can on campus."                                                                 |         |
| S5        | <i>"Ya memadai. Karena menggunakan online kita tidak terau mengeuarkan uang taksi untuk ke kampus, dan menghemat biaya. Jadi macam kita tidak keluar Cuma tenang saja dalam rumah begitu."</i>     | 05      |
|           | "Because we use online, we do not need to spend money on taxis to get to campus and save costs. So it is like we do not go out. We stay calm at home."                                             |         |
| S6        | <i>"Pendapat saya sangat bermanfaat sekali dan mudah."</i>                                                                                                                                         | 06      |
|           | "It is very useful and accessible."                                                                                                                                                                |         |
| S11       | <i>"Zoom dan LMS untuk mempermudah mahasiswa untuk tetap belajar berbagai mata kuliah yang diambil atau ditempuh salah satunya ialah mata kuliah reading."</i>                                     | 11      |
|           | "Zoom and LMS make it easier for students to continue studying various courses taken or taken, one of which is reading courses."                                                                   |         |
| S15       | <i>"E menurut saya e zoom. Karena e bisa bertatap muka selain di ruangan. E... lebih mudah pakai share screen karena langsung e.. di diberikan materinya langsung pas saat e.. saat itu juga."</i> | 12      |
|           | "I think e... zoom. Because e... we can meet face to face even not in the classroom. It's easier to use a shared screen because the material is given directly at that time."                      |         |
| S18       | <i>"Karena selain menjelaskan lewat zoom, saya bisa mendownload ulang materinya di LMS untuk dipelajari lagi."</i>                                                                                 | 15      |
|           | "Besides explaining via Zoom, I can re-download the material on the LMS to study again."                                                                                                           |         |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| S19 | <p><i>“Cukup efektif. Karena belajar mengajar bisa dilakukan dimana dan kapan saja sesuai kesepakatan mahasiswa dan dosen”</i></p> <p><i>“It is quite effective because the learning can be done anywhere and anytime according to the agreement between students and lecturer.”</i></p> <p><i>“Menurut saya keduanya karena saling melengkapi. Pada zoom kita bisa bertatap muka dan praktek secara langsung. Dan LMS dapat digunakan untuk mengakses materi dan tugas.”</i></p> <p><i>“The two are complementary. On Zoom, we can meet face to face and practice directly. The LMS can be used to access materials and assignments.”</i></p> <p><i>“Ternyata LMS tidak serumit dan sesulit yang dibayangkan. Justru dengan adanya LMS dapat membantu saya dalam belajar mandiri setelah pembelajaran melalui zoom.”</i></p> <p><i>“LMS is simpler than imagined. Having an LMS can help me in independent learning after learning via Zoom.”</i></p> | 16 |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|

Source: Authors findings, 2023.

From the table above it can be known that Students' perception on the usefulness of Virtual Learning based instruction in Learning English Reading in Southwest Papua EFL classroom express that virtual learning platforms like Zoom and LMS are highly beneficial and effective. They perceive that utilizing such technology enables them to learn anytime and anywhere, without the need to spend time and money on transportation to campus. Additionally, they appreciate the ease of accessing materials and assignments through LMS, as well as the ability to engage in face-to-face interaction and direct practice via Zoom. Students also recognize that the concurrent use of Zoom and LMS complements each other, allowing for self-directed learning after direct learning sessions. Overall, they feel that virtual learning is effective and facilitates the English learning process, especially in reading courses.

The table below displays the outcomes of students' evaluations regarding the user-friendliness of virtual learning-based instruction for English Reading in EFL classrooms in Southwest Papua.

Table 2. Students' perception of ease of use in Virtual Learning based instruction in learning English reading

| Informants | Statements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Extract |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| S1         | <p><i>“Iya sangat mudah alasanya karena tidak bolak balik ke kampus langsung tatap muka secara online”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, the reason is that you don't go back and forth to campus directly or face-to-face online.”</i></p> <p><i>“Saya merasa nyaman dengan penggunaan metode zoom dan LMS karena lebih mudah diakses tidak perlu ke kampus di rumah langsung online”</i></p> | 18      |

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|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| S3  | <p>"I am comfortable using the Zoom and LMS methods because they are easier to access. There is no need to go to campus at home. Go online directly."</p> <p><i>"Awalnya sulit mengakses LMS."</i></p>                                                                                       | 19 |
|     | <p>"Initially, it was challenging to access the LMS."</p> <p><i>"Puji tuhan mudah dalam mengakses dan tidak ada kendala sedikitpun."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                 |    |
|     | <p>"It's easy, and there are no obstacles at all."</p> <p><i>"Pembelajaran reading menggunakan zoom dan LMS penyampaian materinya mudah dimengerti dan akses ke LMS nya juga mudah"</i></p>                                                                                                  |    |
| S4  | <p>"Learning to read using Zoom and LMS to deliver the material is easy to understand, and access to the LMS is easy."</p> <p><i>"Pembelajaran reading menggunakan zoom dan LMS ternyata penyampaian materinya mudah dimengerti dan akses ke LMS nya tidak sesulit yang dipikirkan."</i></p> | 21 |
|     | <p>"Learning to read using Zoom and LMS makes the delivery of the material easy to understand, and access to the LMS is not as difficult as one might think."</p>                                                                                                                            |    |
| S8  | <p><i>"Iya sangat mudah. Karna kalau lewat zoom kita bisa tatap muka dengan para dosen, kemudian para dosen menjelaskan materi sehingga kita bisa dapat melihat langsung secara jelas."</i></p>                                                                                              | 23 |
|     | <p>"Yes, it's very easy. Via Zoom, we can meet face-to-face with the lecturers, and then the lecturers explain the material so we can see it clearly and directly."</p>                                                                                                                      |    |
| S13 | <p><i>"Sangat mudah karena tidak ada hambatan."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 26 |
|     | <p>"It was easy because there were no obstacles."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |    |
|     | <p><i>"Pembelajaran membaca dengan Zoom dan LMS mudah dimengerti, dan mengakses LMS juga mudah."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                     |    |
| S18 | <p>"Learning reading using Zoom and LMS is easy to understand, and access to the LMS is also easy."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                      | 31 |
|     | <p><i>"Ya, mudah untuk mengakses pembelajaran membaca dengan Zoom dan LMS."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |    |
| S19 | <p>"Yes, it was easy to access the reading course using Zoom and LMS."</p> <p><i>"Ternyata LMS tidak serumit dan sesulit yang dibayangkan. Justru dengan adanya LMS dapat membantu saya dalam belajar mandiri setelah pembelajaran melalui zoom."</i></p>                                    | 32 |
|     | <p>"LMS is simpler than imagined. Having an LMS can help me in independent learning after learning via Zoom."</p>                                                                                                                                                                            |    |
| S20 | <p><i>"Iya merasa mudah untuk mengakses pembelajaran reading dengan menggunakan zoom dan LMS ini."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                   | 33 |

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“Yes, it is easy to access reading lessons by using Zoom, and this LMS.”

Source: Authors findings, 2023.

Table 2. above describes the students in the EFL classroom in Southwest Papua who perceive virtual learning platforms such as Zoom and LMS to be highly user-friendly for learning English reading. They highlight the ease of access and comprehension of materials delivered through these platforms, emphasizing the convenience of online interaction with lecturers and the absence of obstacles in accessing course materials. Additionally, students express comfort in using Zoom and LMS, noting that they provide clear and direct explanations of course content, facilitating a smoother learning process. Overall, students find virtual learning to be straightforward and effective for enhancing their English reading skills in the Southwest Papua EFL classroom.

The following table presents the findings regarding students' attitudes towards the utilization of virtual learning-based instructions for learning reading in EFL classrooms in Southwest Papua.

Table 3. Student's Perception of the Attitude Toward the Use of Virtual Learning-Based Instructions in Learning Reading

| Informants | Statements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Extract |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| S2         | <i>"Antusias karena saya tidak perlu pergi ke kampus."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 35      |
| S3         | <i>"Enthusiastic because I don't need to go to campus."</i><br><i>"Saya sangat termotivasi dan antusias belajar reading melalui pembelajaran online karena mempelajari reading dengan pembelajaran online tersebut menurut saya itu sangat mudah dan bisa diakses dimanapun saya berada jadi itu memudahkan aktivitas sayalah sehari-hari."</i> | 36      |
|            | <i>"I am very motivated and enthusiastic about learning to read through online learning because reading with online learning, in my opinion, is very easy and can be accessed wherever I am, so it makes my daily activities easier."</i>                                                                                                       |         |
|            | <i>"Ya, sangat nyaman."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 38      |
|            | <i>"Yes, very comfortable."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |         |
|            | <i>"Iya efektif. Ya karna walaupun ada kendala tetapi pembeajaran online itu terus berjaan begitu. Jadi keihatannya efektif saja begitu."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |         |
|            | <i>"It's effective. Yes, because despite obstacles, online learning continues to work like that. So, it seems effective."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |         |
| S7         | <i>"Pendapat saya bahwa setelah mengikuti pembelajaran reading dengan menggunakan zoom dan LMS, mengajarkan saya bahwa menggunakan metode pembelajaran online secara zoom dan LMS itu tentu saja baik dan bukan saja melalui metode pembelajaran melalui</i>                                                                                    | 40      |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
|     | <i>mata kuliah reading, tetapi metode pembelajaran melalui zoom dan LMS itu juga kita harus gunakan itu dengan baik dalam beberapa mata kuliah lain dan hal-hal yang lain, yang bisa membangun kita begitu.”</i>                                                                                                                                                             |    |
|     | "My opinion is that after taking reading lessons using zoom and LMS, it taught me that using online learning methods using zoom and LMS is of course good and not only through learning methods through reading courses, but also learning methods through zoom and LMS. we have to use it well in several other courses and other things, which can build us up like that." |    |
| S8  | <i>"Ya rasa nyaman. Rasa nyaman dalam artinya menggunakan hp android untuk bisa masuk belajar atau kuliah ewat zoom tatap muka dengan dosen dan sesama teman untuk sama-sama membangun motivasi yang baik."</i>                                                                                                                                                              | 42 |
|     | "Yes, it feels comfortable. Feeling comfortable means using an Android cellphone to study or lecture via Zoom face-to-face with lecturers and friends to build good motivation."                                                                                                                                                                                             |    |
| S11 | <i>"Saya merasa nyaman dan aman menggunakan laptop atau HP untuk belajar."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 43 |
|     | "I feel comfortable and safe using a laptop or cellphone to study."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |    |
| S14 | <i>"Pengalaman pertama saya, saya merasa canggung karena belum pernah menggunakan metode ini dan e agak kurang nyaman (pertama kali)."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 46 |
|     | "In my first experience, I felt awkward because I never used this method, and e... was a bit uncomfortable (the first time)."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |    |
|     | <i>"Menurut saya yang lebih efektif adalah google meet karena e di sana e dosen mengajar menjelaskan tentang materinya dan kita juga bisa bertanya jika ada materi yang kurang dimengerti."</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|     | "I think what is more effective is Google Meet because e... the lecturer explains the material there, and we can also ask questions if there is material that we don't understand yet."                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |
|     | <i>"Saya merasa nyaman karena kita tidak harus ke kampus untuk kuliah."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |
|     | "I feel comfortable because we don't have to go to campus to do lectures."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |    |
| S15 | <i>"Saya merasa nyaman menggunakan e...zoom lewat HP."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 47 |
|     | "I feel comfortable using e... zoom via handphone."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |    |
| S19 | <i>"Iya, saya merasa nyaman menggunakan perangkat android atau Laptop untuk belajar menggunakan zoom dan LMS."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 50 |
|     | "Yes, I feel very comfortable using an Android device or laptop to learn how to use Zoom and LMS."                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |    |
| S20 | <i>"Perasaan saya tentang tingkat interaksi dengan dosen dalam pembelajaran reading secara online ini sangat bisa berinteraksi dengan"</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 51 |

*leluasa, karena bisa tanya jawab dan langsung mendengar jawabannya.”*

“My feeling about the level of interaction with lecturers in online reading learning is that you can interact freely because you can ask questions and hear the answers right away.”

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Source: Authors findings, 2023.

Table 3 above describes the findings provided, students in the EFL classroom in Southwest Papua have a positive attitude towards virtual learning-based instruction for English reading. They express enthusiasm and motivation due to the convenience and accessibility of online learning, highlighting the comfort they feel in utilizing technology such as Zoom and LMS to engage in face-to-face interactions with lecturers and peers. Despite initial feelings of awkwardness for some students, they acknowledge the effectiveness of platforms like Google Meet for facilitating direct communication with instructors and clarifying course material. Overall, students feel comfortable and secure in using laptops or smartphones for learning, appreciating the flexibility and interactivity that virtual learning offers in enhancing their English reading skills.

#### b. Discussion

The research findings outlined above reveal several key themes regarding students' perceptions of virtual learning methodologies, particularly in the context of English reading instruction in EFL classrooms in Southwest Papua. These themes encompass students' perceived usefulness, ease of use, and attitudes towards virtual learning platforms, such as Zoom and Learning Management Systems (LMS). Let's delve into these findings and interpret them in light of prior research.

Firstly, concerning perceived usefulness, students regard virtual learning platforms, especially Zoom and LMS, as indispensable tools for English reading instruction. They appreciate the flexibility, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness these platforms offer, enabling them to engage in learning from the comfort of their homes without the need for physical commuting. This perception resonates with previous research, such as the study by (Tan et al., 2021), which found that students perceive virtual learning environments as conducive to language learning due to increased access to resources and opportunities for interaction with instructors and peers.

Secondly, students generally find virtual learning platforms easy to navigate, with Zoom being particularly user-friendly. Despite initial reservations, participants gradually adapted to these platforms and found them convenient for accessing course materials and participating in online sessions. This observation aligns with established theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by (Davis, 1989), highlighting the crucial role of perceived ease of use in influencing students' acceptance and adoption of technology. This notion is further supported by prior research advocating for user-friendly interfaces and intuitive design in virtual learning platforms (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Lastly, students exhibit a positive attitude towards virtual learning, expressing motivation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction with their online learning experiences. They value the opportunities for interaction, flexibility, and convenience offered by virtual learning platforms. This positive sentiment mirrors findings from previous studies, including research by Muflih et al. (2021), which explored students' attitudes towards online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite initial challenges and adjustments, most students perceived online learning as effective and enjoyable, indicating an overall positive attitude toward virtual learning.

In essence, the perceptions of students in the present research align with broader trends in the literature on virtual learning and language instruction (Manegre & Sabiri, 2022; Hazaymeh, 2021). Their positive views on the usefulness, ease of use, and overall attitude towards virtual learning platforms contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the efficacy of online learning in EFL contexts. Nonetheless, it remains crucial to continue investigating and addressing potential challenges and barriers to ensure the successful implementation of virtual learning initiatives in language education. Additionally, future research could delve deeper into specific factors influencing students' perceptions and explore strategies for optimizing the effectiveness of virtual learning approaches in diverse educational settings.

## 5. Conclusion

This study shed light on students' perceptions of virtual learning approaches, particularly in the context of English reading instruction in EFL classrooms in Southwest Papua. Overall, students highly perceive virtual learning platforms such as Zoom and Learning Management Systems (LMS) as invaluable tools for English reading instruction. They appreciate the flexibility, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness offered by these platforms, which enable learning from the comfort of their homes without the need for physical commuting. Moreover, students generally find these platforms easy to navigate, gradually adapting to them and recognizing their convenience for accessing course materials and participating in online sessions. Despite initial apprehension, they express a positive attitude towards virtual learning, citing motivation, enthusiasm, and satisfaction with their online learning experiences. These findings align with broader trends in the literature and underscore the efficacy of online learning in EFL contexts. However, addressing potential challenges and barriers and further optimizing virtual learning approaches remain crucial for ensuring their successful implementation in diverse educational settings.

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