



The Implementation of English Language Skills Teaching and Learning during the Pandemic of Covid-19

Tri Pujiani¹

¹*English Education Department, Social Sciences Faculty, Harapan Bangsa University, Indonesia*

Email: tripujiani@uhb.ac.id

Putra Akbar Wibawa²

²*English Education Department, Social Sciences Faculty, Harapan Bangsa University, Indonesia*

Nur Azzizatun Zahro³

³*English Education Department, Social Sciences Faculty, Harapan Bangsa University, Indonesia*

Intan Fadilah Iryaninda⁴

⁴*English Education Department, Social Sciences Faculty, Harapan Bangsa University, Indonesia*

Abstract

Since March 2020, based on Circular letter dated 4 March 2020, Indonesia has implemented online learning to stop the outbreak of covid-19 virus. This immediate shift requires many adjustments, especially in skill subjects such as English Language Skills. This research aimed to describe the implementation of English Language Skills teaching during covid-19 pandemic in some universities in Indonesia. This research was a descriptive qualitative research with questionnaire used to obtain the data. The respondents of this research were English lecturers from some universities in Indonesia as many as 25 lecturers. The result showed that the biggest problem in online learning was internet connection. The lecturers were required to enhance their technology literacy and to be creative in designing the learning process to motivate the students to learn. Besides, the students needed to be more active in searching learning sources independently. The active participations of both lecturers and students are definitely important for the effectiveness of online teaching and learning. It is expected that this research may be reference for all education practitioners in implementing online learning for English Language Skills subjects.

Keywords: online learning, covid-19, language skills, English Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Language is a medium for communication. Mastery of language is a skill or expertise (Husain, 2015).

Because language is a skill, language is under the psychomotor domain. Thus, we learn it we are required to use it, not just to know it. Language is a complex skill involving four sub-

skills. These sub-skills are categorized into receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills consist of listening and reading. While productive skills consist of speaking and writing. These four skills are the core of a language (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020). To Master a language, we have to be able to use these four skills in that language. In the practice of communicating these four skills are integrated each other. For example, when we talk to other people, to be able to give the right response we must also have good listening skills. When we read a text, to show our understanding of the text we have to retell or respond in spoken and written form (Kizilaslam, 2011).

The purpose of language teaching is to develop communicative skills, namely the ability to use language for various purposes and in various situations and conditions (Cynthia, 2014). Language teaching should provide many opportunities for students to practice using the language so that they are more accustomed and honed their abilities. Students should be motivated and stimulated to

communicate in the target language. Various mistakes that may be made are seen as a learning process so that students do not need to be ashamed and avoid it. The role of educators is also very important in language teaching, namely as a friend to practice as well as guiding students to revise their mistakes. Therefore, the interaction between educators and students in language learning, especially language skills is absolutely necessary.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic that began to spread at the end of 2019 in Wuhan and now has lasted more than 1 year has changed everything. This pandemic has forced the global physical closure of businesses, sporting activities, and schools prompting all institutions to migrate to online platforms (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). In Indonesia, the Minister of Education and Culture issued Circular Letter No. 4 on March 4, 2020 regarding the implementation of Education policies during the Covid-19 emergency which marks the obligatory of online learning for all levels of Education (Hafidz, 2020).

Online learning is the use of the internet and several other important technologies to develop materials for educational purposes, instructional delivery and program management (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). There are two types of online learning, namely synchronous and asynchronous (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Synchronous means that educators and students learn at the same time but in different places. Asynchronous means that educators and students learn at different times and places.

The term online learning is not a new thing, but not all educators are ready to fully transform the face-to-face learning to online learning. Huang et. al. explained the challenges faced during the online learning, including the limited time in preparing the online learning materials/adjusting the existing materials to be presented online, the limited opportunities for teachers and students to interact, and the need for an effective pedagogical approach to motivate students to study online (Huang et al., 2020).

Many studies have been conducted related to the implementation of online learning. Based on research conducted by Putu, et al. teachers have difficulty in being creative related to learning methods. In conventional learning, teacher can use a variety of methods depending to the material, task characteristics, and situations. However, in online learning the activities are limited to sharing materials, videos, and assignments. In addition, providing feedback on student assignments cannot be as optimal as in face to face meeting (Suputra, Nitiasih, & Paramarta, 2020). From the student's point of view, the biggest obstacles experienced during online learning are network problems and internet data. On the other hand, the use of social media such as Whatsapp, Facebook, and YouTube can improve their writing, listening, and speaking ability even though it has no effect on their learning motivation (Hafidz, 2020). This is in line with the statement of Fansury, et al. that during the Covid-19 pandemic, students' motivation tends to decrease because they only

study from home (Hamzah Fansury, January, & Wira Rahman, 2020). Related to English Language Skills Teaching and Learning, Rini explained some of the challenges in teaching listening online which include choosing the right technology-based media, systems and applications, packaging the material to make it look simple without compromising on quality, and choosing effective methods and strategies (Susilowati, 2020).

Of the many studies discussing online learning, no one specifically discusses online learning in Language Skills in which it also has a bigger challenge because educators must design a lesson that can facilitate students to practice using English independently while at the same time requiring more effort to provide feedback on the students' learning progress. This study aims to describe the implementation of online learning in English Language Skills lectures (Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading) based on the experiences of English lecturers from several universities in Indonesia. In addition,

this study also aims to reveal problems that arise during the learning process as well as suggestions from lecturers experiencing in teaching language skills to improve the quality of learning in the future, especially learning language skills.

METHODOLOGY

This research was descriptive qualitative. Qualitative descriptive method is a method examining an object, condition, system of thought, to explain a fact systematically and accurately and the relationship of the phenomenon under the study. This method is relevant to be used in research where the required information is directly obtained from those experiencing the phenomenon being investigated and where time and resources are limited (Asmara, 2020).

This research was conducted in January 2021. The data in this study were obtained through a questionnaire consisting of multiple choices, check boxes, and open answers. Questions in the questionnaire were related to learning methods, learning media, the percentage of face-to-face activities

and online lectures, forms of assignments, assessments, obstacles and suggestions. Questionnaires were distributed to English lecturers at several universities in Indonesia. The following is a list of universities and the number of lecturers being the respondents in this study.

Tabel 1. Responders List

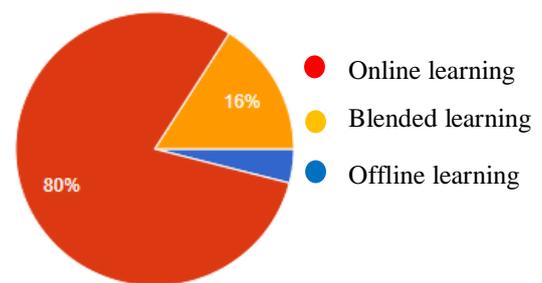
No.	University Name	Quantity
1.	Universitas Harapan Bangsa	3
2.	UIN Raden Intan Lampung	1
3.	Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Semarang	14
4.	Universitas Nahdatul Ulama Purwokerto	1
5.	IAIN Kudus	1

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Learning Method

The learning method here means that the learning process was done face-to-face, online, or blended. Based on the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 4 March 4th, 2020, the implementation of teaching and learning must be carried out online. This Circular Letter was

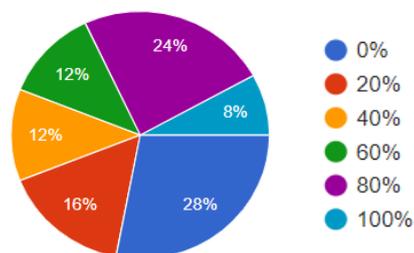
addressed to all levels of Education from Early Childhood Education (*PAUD*) to Higher Education. However, its implementation was left to the regional head and the head of the educational institution concerned. In some universities, several learning methods were applied, namely for courses / lessons that are theoretical in nature, all of which were carried out online. As for the Practical Course, the implementation was postponed to the upcoming semester, and some were carried out face-to-face while maintaining the health protocol. From the data obtained, the following is the percentage of learning methods applied during the covid-19 pandemic.



Picture 1. The Percentage of Learning Methods Used in Teaching Language Skills during the Pandemic of Covid-19

Based on Figure 1, 80% of respondents applied online learning during the covid-19 pandemic, 16%

applied blended methods, and 4% applied online learning. There are two definitions of blended learning, namely the combination of traditional and online learning (Pujiani & Krisbiantoro, 2019a) or the combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning (Chaeruman, 2020). The definition referred here is the second definition where learning activities are a combination of virtual face-to-face and independent learning. Therefore, the questions were detailed again by asking the percentage of face-to-face activities in learning English Language Skills during the covid-19 pandemic. Here are the results obtained.

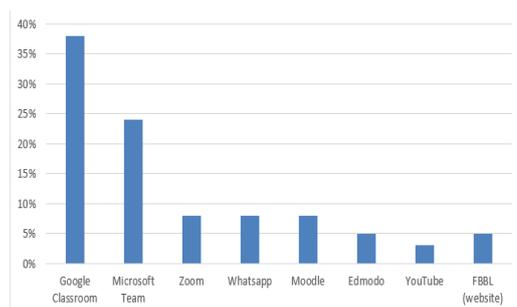


Picture 2. The Percentage of Virtual Face-to-face Learning Activities

2. Learning Media

In online learning, of course, a platform is needed as a learning

medium. Based on a survey conducted by Reimers et.al. of 333 respondents from 99 countries, online learning media with high ratings include Clic Seguro, Moodle, Zoom, Ed Dojo, Google Teach from Home, and others (Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra, & Tuominen, 2020). Meanwhile, based on a survey conducted in this study, the most widely used learning media in Indonesia were Google Classroom (37%), Microsoft Team (24%), followed by other media such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Moodle, Edmodo, FBBL, and YouTube. Most lecturers used more than one medium in teaching, for example using google classroom for learning activities and WhatsApp for discussion or using Zoom meetings and Moodle. This was because not all media could meet the learning needs, for example the chat feature in Moodle was less effective so it needed to be equipped with a WhatsApp group which was easier to access by anyone using a cellphone.



Picture 3. The Percentage of Learning Media Used by Lecturers

3. Teaching and Learning Activities

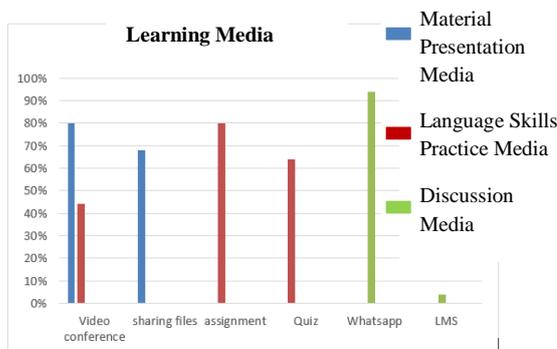
As stated above that the purpose of learning Language Skills is to develop communicative abilities (Cynthia, 2014), teaching and learning activities in English Language Skills lectures must be designed in such a way as to facilitate students in practicing English. Basically, online learning is about transforming teaching and learning activities in the classroom into an online platform. Teaching and learning activities in general include the presentation of material from the teacher, discussions/questions and answers, exercises, and evaluations. During this pandemic, educators are required to be able to facilitate online teaching and learning activities without reducing the quality of learning. Most of the

respondents (80%) did virtual face-to-face learning via video conference and some (68%) distributed learning materials to students to be studied independently by students.

During the covid-19 pandemic, most lecturers facilitated English Language Skills practice activities through assignments, both in written form for Writing Courses and in the form of video for Speaking Courses (80%). Some lecturers also used video conferencing to monitor students' language skills directly (44%). For Reading and Listening Courses, practice activities could be facilitated through online quizzes or written assignments (64%).

For discussion activities, 96% of respondents used WhatsApp. Meanwhile, the other 4% used discussion forums on the platform used, for example the forum feature in Moodle. WhatsApp was chosen as a medium for interacting with students because WhatsApp is the most widely used application in Indonesia (Asmara, 2020). In addition, Sampath, Kalyani, and Soohinda in Asmara (2020) also stated that WhatsApp

offers communication services, especially written messages that can be easily accessed via mobile phones and file sharing features such as images, videos, and documents.

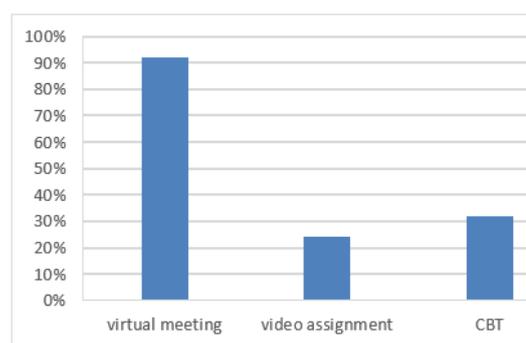


Picture 4. Learning Media

4. Grading

Assessment or evaluation aims to measure the students' learning progress. There are two types of assessment, namely formative assessment, and summative assessment. Formative assessment is used to measure students' progress during teaching and learning activities. While the summative assessment is usually carried out at the end of teaching and learning activities and covers several topics at once. As many as 92% of respondents used video assignments to evaluate students' language skills. As many as 24% of

respondents admitted that they preferred to have virtual conferences to be able to evaluate students' language skills directly. In addition, 32% of respondents took the advantage of the Computer Based Test feature in the LMS used.



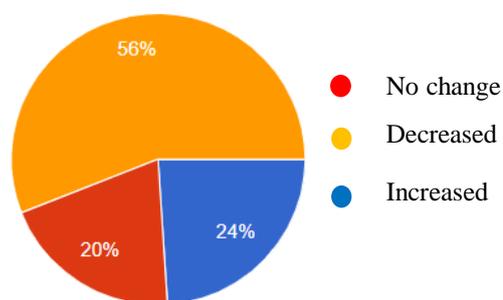
Picture 5. Evaluation Media

5. Learning Motivation

Learning motivation is an effort made by students to learn because of their own desires and satisfaction with learning activities. There are two types of motivation, namely intrinsic motivation that comes from the students themselves and external motivation which is motivation arising due to influences outside of students. Learning motivation is very important in achieving learning targets. In general, students with high learning

motivation will get better results than students with low learning motivation (Pujiani & Krisbiantoro, 2019b).

In the midst of all the limitations due to the pandemic, student learning motivation generally tended to decrease. However, based on the results of a survey of respondents, it was found that 20% stated that students' motivation was the same as before the pandemic, 56% stated that students' motivation decreased, and 24% stated that students' motivation increased. This depended on how the lecturer managed the class including the selection of learning media, delivery of material, speed and satisfaction in providing feedback to students, and others.



Picture 6. Students' Learning Motivation

6. The Obstacles during the Online Learning

Online learning implemented during this pandemic was indeed a new thing for some lecturers, so that in its implementation it still required a lot of adjustments and evaluations so that the quality of learning could be maintained. Some of the obstacles related to online learning mentioned by respondents were:

- a. Limited internet connection
- b. Increased need for internet data
- c. Lack of technology mastery
- d. Less effective time management in learning
- e. Lack of students' learning motivation

7. Suggestions for Language Skills

Teaching and Learning

For this question, the researcher asked the lecturers for suggestions regarding Language Skills Teaching and Learning. The following is the summary of their suggestions. First, it would be better to have face-to-face meetings several times with health protocols, of course, so that students can obtain a better

understanding of the material. Second, educators should continue to improve their mastery of technology and learn more about online learning methods and media so that learning activities will be more interesting. Third, from the side of students, they should also be more active in responding to lecturers' instructions, increase their learning motivation, and increase their awareness to do self-learning and look for additional learning resources independently. The fourth is a suggestion for the government that the internet data subsidy can be further expanded so that the usage is not limited to certain online learning media because not all educators use the same platform.

CONCLUSION

Language Skills teaching and learning which basically requires more practice than theory does require a different treatment from theoretical subjects in general. Educators are required to quickly adapt and develop their professional quality in order to keep up with the rapid changes in education. The problems that

generally arise during the online learning include internet connection problems, economic problems, technology mastery problems, time management problems, and learning motivation problems. It is expected that the results of this study can be a reference for educators and pre-service educators in managing online teaching and learning activities, especially for Language Skills Courses.

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