

THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING ONLINE: THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstrak

Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, dunia telah menghadapi perubahan yang cepat. Sehubungan dengan terjadinya Covid 19, sistem pendidikan mulai menggiatkan metode pembelajaran baru yaitu metode daring. Pendekatan baru diperkenalkan untuk memastikan bahwa proses pembelajaran tetap dilakukan dalam situasi yang luar biasa. Pembelajaran daring tetap dilakukan meski situasi saat ini sudah kembali normal. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis manfaat dan tantangan pengajaran bahasa Inggris online di tingkat universitas. Analisis dilakukan dengan studi kepustakaan. Penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa pembelajaran online memiliki beberapa manfaat, seperti kenyamanan, penghematan waktu, penghematan uang, dan tersedianya sumber online untuk membantu siswa lebih memahami mata pelajaran. Di sisi lain, pembelajaran daring juga memiliki beberapa keterbatasan, seperti ketidakstabilan koneksi internet. Pembelajaran online juga memiliki peluang gangguan yang tinggi. Terakhir, kurangnya kemampuan dan pengalaman staf pengajar dalam menggunakan teknologi baru menantang pendekatan yang relatif baru.

Kata kunci: online, peluang, tantangan

Abstract

In the last few years, the world has been facing rapid changes. Due to the occurrence of Covid 19, the education system has started to intensify the new method of learning, the online method. The new approach is introduced to ensure that the learning process is still conducted in an extraordinary situation. Online learning is still being practised even when the current situation is returning to normal. The objective of this study is to analyse the benefits and challenges of online English teaching at the university level. The analysis is conducted with library research. The research revealed that online learning has several benefits, such as comfort, time-saving, money-saving, and the availability of online sources to help students better understand the subject. On the other hand, online learning also has some limitations, such as the instability of internet connection. Online learning also has a high chance of distraction. Finally, the teaching staff's lack of ability and experience in using new technology challenges the relatively new approach.

***Key words:** online, opportunities, challenges*

INTRODUCTION

Online learning has achieved popularity in the last few years. The development of internet technology brings virtual learning into consideration. The application of online learning has become more massive recently when the outbreak of Covid 19 promotes remote education worldwide. This method effectively reaches students while they are away or when there is an obstacle to gathering everyone in a classroom.

The term online learning was first used in 1995 when LMS (Learning Management System) was introduced. Therefore, the early definition of online learning is e-learning by using the LMS and uploading learning sources to online platforms (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Online learning is a learning environment where students and teachers are separated by time and space. The course contents are conveyed through media such as IT applications, multimedia resources, the internet, or videoconference (Dung, 2020). In line with the previous definitions, Tareen & Haand (2020) see online learning as an approach to education using internet technology to communicate and collaborate in learning and teaching activities. Students and teachers might be separated by geographical location and time in this learning context. The variety of definitions of online learning involves the flexibility of location, the availability of teaching sources online, and the application of internet technology.

It is crucial to consider that the development of current education trends in universities is seen as an effort to provide a better experience both for instructors and students. The application of a new approach, in this case, online learning, can be perceived as a way of responding to the need for new teaching and learning methods. The new method is necessary to ensure that the learning objective will be fully accomplished.

Online learning has several characteristics that might significantly influence the application of this method. Dumford & Miller (2018) have listed some items such as technology and interaction. Technology that is well functioning is needed to ensure that the students and instructors will be well connected through online media. As a simple example, students and teachers will not take too much time to access the learning content. The inadequate technological facility can be frustrating for students and teachers and, later on, affect the students' perception of online learning. Interaction is also an essential component to consider in online learning. Less interaction between students and teachers may make the students feel more isolated from the learning interaction. Therefore, there is a need to adapt some norms of traditional face-to-face class interaction.

Despite the issues that potentially impact the success of online learning, the implementation of this approach is expanding massively. Long before Covid 19, more than 50% of higher education institutions in United States declared that online education was their long-term strategy. Then the total number of students studying on campus dropped by more than a million between 2012 to 2016 ((Seaman, Allen & Seaman, 2018). The outbreak of the Covid 19 has generated the application of distance learning massively. Several online meeting applications have been created to facilitate the learning process in virtual classrooms. The application's invention is advantageous as it can ensure that the learning process can be as effective as possible (Pratama, Azman, Kassymova, & Duisenbayeva, 2020). Indeed, the applications may not fully represent the features

of face-to-face interaction. However, they can help both students and teachers to interact virtually.

METHODOLOGY

Library research method was applied in writing this article. The information was collected from the earlier studies, then developed to support the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Some benefits of Online learning

The implementation of online learning at university level might be challenging. However, there are some benefits such as follow:

1. Comfort

Online learning enables the use of unlimited space in the classrooms. Research by Fatonia, et al (2020) suggests that comfort is on the top list of the advantage of the virtual class. 32% of 100 research participants say they can access the online class from any comfortable, educational environment they can find. Mukhtar, et al 2020) also finds that the students satisfy because they can quickly and comfortably join the lesson wherever they are. Coming to class requires less preparation since students and instructors do not need specific outfits or pack up their lunch box for school.

2. Time efficiency

Time utilization is also one benefit of online learning. According to Fatonia, et al (2020), nearly 30% of 100 research participants agree that they consume less time. It is, for example, because they do not spend time travelling to the university. This travel time can then be used for another productive activity. By accessing class from wherever they are, the students reduce the possibility of coming late to class. This method prevents the students and teachers of commuting long hours.

3. Money-saving

Online learning can be financially efficient since students do not need to move to the city or place where the institution is located. Moreover, there is no need to spend money on a rental house. Transportation costs are also much cheaper since they do not need to visit the university daily. Wherever the students are, as long as students can access the internet and the gadget is available, students can join the class. Also, fully online courses are usually cheaper than on-campus ones (Sadeghi, 2019).

4. Better students' understanding

The online approach requires lecturers to upload their teaching sources online. References, slide presentations, links, and even videos are available for the students to observe more than once. Indeed, not all students comprehend learning topics from one-time discussions. The availability of sources online enables students to access them whenever they need them.

Challenges of online learning

Although online learning offers several benefits for both students and instructors, it is also facing some challenges.

1. Technological challenges

The availability of sufficient properties for online teaching and learning is still challenging in Indonesia. Internet connection is poor, especially in small suburbs and many remote areas. Another problem is the economy, where not all students can afford adequate gadgets for online classes (Aliyyah, et al, 2020). It is common to hear students' reasons for not joining the class because they are running out of internet data and do not have money to provide it. The emergence of these technical issues is frustrating for both teachers and students. The learning process becomes less effective, and its purpose is hard to achieve.

2. High chances of distraction

The physical classroom is set to guarantee that the learning process is distraction-free. However, homes or outdoor settings are not. These places are less ideal for learning. Students can be distracted by the environment when they access the course from these places. This situation will impact the outcome of the learning process. Some learning applications provide the off-camera option for the users. Many students attend classes off-camera because their environment is too private, such as the bedroom. Environment distraction prevents the learning activities from achieving high learning outcomes.

3. Teaching staff's lack of technological skill

As a relatively new teaching method, virtual teaching skill has not been taught yet in the previous teacher training program. Many instructors are forced to shift from face-to-face teaching methods to online teaching. Teachers should be trained to improve digital and other specific online education abilities to effectively plan and employ an innovative educational plan (Ferri, Giffoni & Guzzo, 2020). This situation is not a big deal for young teachers with strong digital literacy. However, things are not that simple for old teachers. They have been used to face-to-face teaching for many years. To help teachers, the Indonesian government declares that they have provided the tools or platform to support online learning at every educational level. However, there is a lack of training to prepare the teaching instructors to operate the platforms (Churiyah, et al, 2020). Even when the government provides training, young and old instructors' abilities to implement the skills are different. Shifting offline teaching to online teaching is frustrating for some instructors.

CONCLUSION

Rapid changes in the world require changes in education. The concept of online learning was introduced before the pandemic. However, the emergence of Covid 19 accelerates the implementation of virtual learning hugely. Indeed, Indonesia's education system is passionate about accepting the idea of digital learning. It is realized that this method enables the learning process to be carried out in any possible situation. Online learning is comfortable, efficient in terms of

time, and financially economical. Another benefit is that it can help students to understand courses better because the sources are available online.

On the other hand, some factors appear to challenge online learning. The instability of internet connection in Indonesia is a significant problem in virtual education. The possibility of distraction may reduce the quality of learning outcomes. Finally, the lack of skills in implementing relatively new teaching platforms is challenging for some instructors

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