

Challenges of Online Class Amid the Pandemic of the Covid 19

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Abstract—During the Pandemic Covid 19 outbreak, online learning has become the only medium for learning activities. The face to face classroom has been moved to an online classroom instantly without preparing the readiness of students, teacher, and school. Thus, this research aims at investigating the barriers of online learning class amid the pandemic of Covid 19 in English Department, Politeknik Negeri Padang. This is a qualitative study. The data taken from interview and observation. The respondents of this research are the lecturers of the English Department of Politeknik Negeri Padang who teach Writing for Media course and the 4th semester students who take Writing for Media class in the even semester this year. 2 majors challenge reported are the setting of online class and the technology. Formulating the online class syllabus with the proper activity and delivering style becomes the greatest teacher challenge. Then, the limitation of internet facilities is general problem for the students live in remote area.

Keywords—challenges, online learning, writing, Covid 19

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two rationales for investigating challenges of online class activity amid the Pandemic of Covid 19 in English Department, Politeknik Negeri Padang. First, during the Pandemic Covid 19 outbreak, online learning has become the only medium for learning activities. Due to this pandemic, the face to face classroom is cut off and directly moved to online class. Thus, the online class is done with face to face classroom preparation and non-web based material in the middle of semester. However, teaching online requires a different pedagogy and unique set of skills from that of the traditional classroom [1].

Nevertheless, in this learning environment, how the teacher manages the class, gives feedback and engages the students into the classroom is a big challenge. Boling et al. [1] argue that the instructors in online distance learning are faced with new pedagogical issues surrounding student interactions, course content design and delivery, multiple levels of argue that the instructors in online learning are faced with new pedagogical issues surrounding student interactions, course content design and delivery, multiple levels of communication,

defining new types of assignments and performance expectations and different assessment and evaluation techniques. All of these should be taken in full awareness.

Based on researcher observation, students are overwhelmed by the enormous amount of assignment given by the teacher amid this pandemic without deeper understanding of what they are studying. Boling et al. [1] argues that for online instructors to provide students with experiences that challenge their higher-order cognitive skills as opposed to simply transferring content to them. Hence, the challenges faced by both teacher and students in online class need to be analysed and described to perceive the quality of the learning experience as a whole. It is not merely using technology without seeking further what is the best practice for teaching in online class and how students can engage in it.

Second, the online class may offer some potential for both teachers and students. The students might be more attracted to online class because their daily life is close to technology. Operating a new application is uncomplicated for most university students. They would be familiar with the apps in just a minute. Then, students can adjust their learning time by finding out more information about the topic being discussed in online class when they have to stick to computer and internet connection, as they rarely do in traditional classrooms. For the teachers, they may explain the lesson by creating web-based content and the teacher can save the time in delivering the topic by sharing the same web based content to some parallel online class.

Under this condition, the researcher may investigate the online learning challenges and potential amid the pandemic of Covid 19 in English Department of Politeknik Negeri Padang (PNP). How the teachers conduct online class and what works for their class and how they create an online learning environment will be described further. Next, what are the potential of online learning for both teachers and students amid this pandemic will be studied to seek for a better class management to be applied for the next online class for the same subject in English Department of PNP.

II. METHODS

Qualitative research design was employed as the method in this study. It concerns on discovering the challenges and potential of online learning for teachers and students in Writing for Media class amid the pandemic of Covid 19 in English Department, PNP. Participatory approach was chosen because the researcher involved in the subject being investigated [2]. The participants of this research are four lecturers who teach Writing for Media subject in English Department and the 4th semester students of English Department of PNP who take Writing for Media class in the even semester this year. There are 47 students that are taken by random purposive sampling. The rationales for purposely selecting them are the participants are having fully online class during this pandemic outbreak. Then, the age of the participants is in the range of 19 and 22 years old. The result of this research is likely to be a starting point for the teachers to organize the online learning activity better in the next semester and for the students themselves to have better learning experience.

For this study, the researchers analysed the data collected from (1) background unstructured interviews, (2) survey (3) unstructured interviews. The background unstructured interviews were employed in figuring out the participants' identity, knowledge and experience in joining the online learning. The second instrument was applied to find out the challenges and potential in online learning activities for the teacher and students. Before the interview session began, the researchers explained the purpose of the interview and the confidentiality of the students' responses. The interview was recorded and then transcribed for the purpose in analysing the data.

The data collected were analysed descriptively. In analysing the qualitative data the stages consisted of, firstly, domain analysis, whose data may be gained from the background unstructured interviews, concerned about studying the participants identity, knowledge and experience in applying online learning. The second analysis is related to the teaching and learning process in online class. The challenges and opportunities of online class is for teachers and students.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After observing and analysing the data, the researchers categorize the challenges of online learning class during the pandemic of Covid 19 in English department of Politeknik Negeri Padang into two:

A. *Setting the Online Class*

In March 2020, at the 5th meeting of this even semester, all face to face classrooms were stopped because of Covid 19 Pandemic. The classes were moved to online class with face to face classroom instructional design. However, the setting for Writing for Media subject, in English department is not design for fully online class. So that, how the current traditional

classroom instructional design might be modified to the online class is a challenge for the teacher [3].

Teaching online requires a different pedagogy and unique set of skills from that of the traditional classroom [1]. Then, Teachers need to define delivery mode and design the material to be delivered online that fit the learning objectives. As stated by Duncan and Young [4] that planning and organization of online class is important. So that, teacher need to review the syllabus whether the goals can be achieved through online class and design the activity to reach the objectives and engaging students as well. There would be some revision to offline syllabus to be used in online space.

It is clearly stated by Kengwe and Kidd [5] to transit from traditional pedagogy to active online learning pedagogies, teaching styles need to be altered within their traditional classroom. As this subject learning outcomes are the publication of the students writing in printed media or online media platform, this subject require the students to go to the field finding out the updated information and then write it in a form of News and Feature. However, because staying home is the only option for the students due to this pandemic, this practice was adjusted into homework and maximizing their home setting.

(.....they were supposed to collect the informant from the field, and now it was replaced by gathering information from their own family, and the topic is about what has happened today, and they could find the information from googling it through the internet)

Then, to fulfil the subject learning outcomes, time given and the number of workloads need to be balanced so that the requirement of the subject can be accomplished. Particularly, the extra time is needed to adapt with learning and practicing in new ways.

(Teacher: .some of the students could submit the assignment on time, others submitted it late and also few of them did not submit it. After 2 weeks, I have to remind them about the submission. For the next assignment I define the due date for the homework was based on the type of the work. It could be done within 2 days or up to one week. So during the time, they (the students) could receive the lesson materials that we gave to them and they could submit the assignment before the dateline...)

Teachers also need to define student's task/assignments or project that can promote student engagement. Teachers must offer a series of task or projects so that they could finish the task with a comprehensive grade and achieve the learning outcomes of the course or subject. Most of the students who could not accomplish the tasks because they do not understand the topics or it is hard for them to make and finish the task.

(Student: I would have gotten difficulties in understanding the lesson from the beginning, even though the lecturer had open the discussion through whatsapp group, still I could not understand.)

(Teacher: In this online learning, sometimes they (the students) hesitate or reluctant asking about the lesson or something they are in doubt. Sometimes they give questions related to the assignment in the last minutes before the dateline of the assignment. And this kind of online questioning and answering activity could not give full satisfaction compared with offline activity.)

In addition, the working on online environment needs to be supported by a set of online material [6]. Both this is intended to present the real situation to the online learning and student feel teacher presence. There is an absence of tones, body language and other physical clues in online learning [7] can lead to miscommunication. It can be anticipated by creating multimedia content. Teachers should prepare multimedia based content and technology enhanced language learning. Thus, it is a challenge for the teacher to create a meaningful activity and comprehensive material.

(Student: If we just read the materials then we need to read it comprehensively, but if we see and heard the explanation directly, Insyah Allah I understand the topic clearer.)

(Student: Frankly speaking, I have difficulty in this online learning activity because my learning type is a learner that needs direct explanation so as the result, I did not fully understand the materials such as ppt and pdf that were given by the lecturers.)

(Student: I need direct explanation (in learning). Because of that, perhaps I can be helped by sending audio or video to explain each lesson material.)

In addition, teachers can define synchronous or asynchronous activity mode for the class. In this pandemic, the class activity mode is mostly conducted in asynchronous even though the synchronous were also done in 2 or 3 meeting. However the problem arise in asynchronous mode, that the inability of face to face interactions and student may skip the opportunity to participate simultaneously and in class discussion because of late posting and late response [3].

(Student: I got the reply for my comment for hours and it's hard to recall what is being discussed previously and sometimes the session was already ended when I join the forum.)

(Teacher: The student's participation level in this online class could be said around 90%. However, for students who participated actively in class including in submitting the assignment could be said around 60 %.)

In addition to the supportive learning, the teacher give the feedback on the student assignment and give the reward where it can improve student's motivation and comprehension to the topic. Duncan and Young [4], giving feedback on students assignment from various English classes with an enormous number of students is so thought-provoking.

(Student: The lecturers would give revision for each of the assignments submitted and the lecturer would inform directly through private comment in Google classroom

feature so that it helped me to understand the lesson deeply, and to know where my mistakes is.)

(Student 2: The lecturer also gave a kind of reward to the students whose writings or the assignments were published by online media, and these students could receive the excellent mark.)

(Student 3: The lecturer often gave comments on the assignments I submitted, and the feedback gave motivation for me to revise my assignment since I had known the mistakes.)

B. Using Technology and Mastering the Software

Technology and human capability are incorporated to support online learning. The capability of using computer is not sufficient. Mastering the software which specifically designed for learning purposes is more prominent. In this subject, the teacher and the students are already familiar with the Learning Management System (LMS) especially Google classroom and Edmodo. It has been used on the previous semester before the pandemic of Covid 19 and at beginning of this semester for storing the students' work. So, there are no difficulties in using the Google classroom and Edmodo as the LMS.

On the other hand, not all of the students have computer or notebook for supporting online learning. It is a normal in developing countries that private laptop is not available [8]. Thus, the use of mobile phone was maximized. The students downloaded and installed the LMS to their mobile phone even though some features might be fragmentary. Then, for class discussion, Whatsapp was used since this application can be accessed through mobile phone. Teacher considered it as the simplest way to organize discussion and students attendance.

(Teacher: We took the attendance list in whatsapp group, then they opened Google classroom to find out the materials and they could do questions and answers session with us during the course session. The assignment was submitted via Google classroom and the discussion session was done through Whatsapp group.)

Additionally, technology is also helpful in creating multimedia based content. The teachers need to master the editing software and updated technology. Training for teachers on the latest technology must be provided [9] to and teacher should call for it [10]. The updated Editing application such as Camtesia, Genially, Adobe could be helpful in creating the content. Audio, video, animation might be combined so that the content is interesting and comprehensive.

Furthermore, the internet connection is a big state of affairs for the students. The stable internet connection is limited in remote area where the students mostly lived in. The submission of their assignment, class discussion, downloading the material might be constrained by this issue.

(Student: When you opened the discussion session in whatsapp, we still could have the internet connection. But to open the Google classroom and download the materials

and to submit the assignment then the connection started to slow down, this made the delay in submitting the assignment. So when we wanted to submit the assignment, we had to find the best spot with a strong signal.)

(Teacher : perhaps from the internet connection, it cannot be denied that most of the students live in the rural areas with poor internet connection so it becomes the obstacle for us to deliver the learning materials and this condition makes them not fully understand the lesson especially if we ask them to access various applications.)

(Student: We could have a discussion with the lecturer, the materials given were quite clear, if there were questions, the lecturer could answer it, and the attendance taking was also clear. So perhaps the signal was the problem.)

IV. CONCLUSION

There are some challenges faced by both teachers and students in online class amid the pandemic of Covid 19. Teachers need to set the class into a fully online class, so it needs more effort from the teacher to formulate the syllabus, the learning outcomes, and the content that are appropriate for online class. The presence of the teacher need to be addressed by providing multimedia based content and provoke the real time communication. The sufficient feedback on students work are respected to student's motivation in isolated learning. So that simultaneous discussion is also needed for student's comprehension toward the subject. It is hoped that online class can be well managed and organized. So that the online class will run better and reach the expected learning outcomes.

This research highlight the challenging factors in online learning amid the Pandemic of Covid 19 in English Department of Politeknik Negeri Padang, Indonesia. This study constrained by the time factors where the student's respondent are not taken all from those 2 parallel subjects. It might be inadequate for capturing all the challenges they faced. Then, these finding might be beneficial for teachers to design the instruction better implication in online class.

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