

Critical Discourse Analysis on Difficulties in Teaching English Skills During Pandemic: Indonesian's English Lecturers Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to discover the most difficult English skills to teach during pandemic that compelled education system to shift to online teaching from the perspectives of English lecturers in Indonesia. Those English skills are; speaking, writing, listening, and reading. This research employed survey research design. The participants in this study are 20 English lecturers in various universities and English language courses in Indonesia. The instruments undertaken in this research are questionnaires of the most difficult English skill to teach during online learning and the solution devised to overcome the difficulties by English lecturers in Indonesia, and Critical Discourse Analysis was utilised as the data analysis technique. The findings of this research discovered that majority of English lecturers deemed that speaking as the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning by wide margin, which was approximately 70 % compare to other skills. Speaking deemed as the most difficult one due to these traits; limited online interactions, students' hesitation and lack of language proficiency. Thus, this research also pointed out the solution devised by the English lecturers and tutors in Indonesia as follow; utilising alternative online media, and facilitating lecturers' and peer's feedback.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, lecturers' perspective, English skills, online learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

There are no reasons for halting learning and studying process in this digital era, since internet has been a primary need to most people, and internet is available and can be accessed anytime and anywhere. In other words, online learning was one of the accepted methods to ensure the continuation of education process, besides the use of internet in online teaching was considerably different from any technology that previously utilised, and it has already widely accepted and applied in any higher education in global context [1]. Nonetheless, during global pandemic that possesses significant threats to everyone in the learning and studying process conducted in the classroom, thus, online learning offers good solution when there is a global pandemic such as Covid-19. Besides, in modern community online learning is regarded as appropriate innovation for educational system in 21st century, since university across the globe are steadily increasing the application of online courses as a means to generate lifelong learning, and the demand of the modern society will greatly impact the need of

online learning as well [2]. Therefore, since it was advisable to reduce physical contacts between students and educators whilst maintain social distancing. The closure of schools and any educational institutions also led to the rise of online learning and teaching process.

The rising trend of usage of online learning also presents difficulties or abrupt challenges. However, since rapid technological advancements has been able to bridge the need of both educators and students. Learning and teaching process have shifted to online learning, although it may face some difficulties in some of the courses. One of difficulty was teaching language skills, notably English language skills, during global pandemic that forced everyone to shift to online learning. There were four language skills namely; speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Each one of them has their own needs and they are bound to each other's, especially in order to master a language or communicative purposes [3]. In other words, mastering language skills itself may offer huge advantageous for any language learners who wishes to master a language.

In which, during global pandemic that requires both educators and students to adhere to method of online learning, the learning process may bound to face difficulties. The obstacles itself may present in how learning and teaching process have adjusted to online learning, especially in teaching language skills that have different characteristics.

In Indonesia, there are lots of universities offer English as part of their program, either at the language course, undergraduate program, graduate program, and at the Teacher Profession Program (*Pendidikan Profesi Guru*). Therefore the researcher here would like to map the difficult English skills and the solution in university level from the perspective of lecturers and tutors in Indonesia to constitute better insights regarding how to improve the lecturing, and learning process[4]. Thus, the researcher here would like to discover about the English lecturers' perspectives regarding the most difficult English skills to teach during online teaching and the solution devised to overcome the difficulties.

1.1. English Skills

In language there are four primary skills namely; reading, speaking, writing, and listening. Each one of the holds significant meaning for someone's language proficiency, nonetheless in English language, and those four skills must worked together to any language learning [5]. In addition, language skills as part of language regarded as a means of communication that need to be integrated in order to master a language [3]. Then, those four skills provide lots of advantageous for any language learners; as a foundation to be able to communicate with ease, with solid evidence that lead to the building of students' confidence.

More importantly, those languages skills also assisted the students to integrate the skills one to another[5]; listening helps the students' ability to speak; reading helps students' develop their written communication, grammar, structure of the language, and the vocabulary as well; writing helps them in developing their knowledge and reading fluency; and speaking mastery was highly associated with written language. Moreover, educators not only focus on the students' language skills, but also their motivation and enthusiasm towards learning English, more importantly the English skills [6]. Therefore, teaching and learning English language skills have lots of aspects that need to be taken care of in order to be able to fully master it, either from the lecturers' perspectives or from students' point of view.

1.2. Online Learning

Online learning has proven to be a solution in this modern era, and the shifting interest to online education also has increased over years, and at the same time higher education in United States has realised that set of instructions methods will decide the future of higher

education that would highly rely on online interactions [7]. However, the success rate and the quality of online learning also relies on several aspects; communication, technology, time management, pedagogy, and assessment [8].

Therefore, online learning also offers negative traits such as dropout rates and issues on the achievement, thus to avoid the aforementioned issues, the need of deep and thorough research have been urgently needed to raise the awareness of the educators about the attentions and required changes in order to keep improving the quality of online learning and teaching process[9].

1.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perceives as a tool to identify the relationship of socio-cultural contexts with discourse, power, dominance, and social inequality [10]. In other words, CDA assists in discovering the contextual relations of ideology, power, inequality and many other variables which can be analysed in spoken and written discourses. CDA also serves as a instrument to investigate the relation of language and society, more importantly in explaining of how does the discourses flow [11]. Besides, Critical Discourse Analysis explores the associations of language use with the social and political contexts, yet it also critically relates to the values, norms and expectation of certain discourse communities that raises social, economic, and political concern [12].

Therefore, any attempts of interpreting and analysing the texts with social conventions must adhere to the eight principles of CDA [11]; CDA addresses social issues, power relations are discursive, discourses constructs society and culture, discourse does ideological work, discourse is historical, socio-cognitive approach is necessary to comprehend the relations of texts and society, discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory which employs systematic methodology, and CDA is socially keen scientific paradigm. Henceforth, in order to utilise CDA the following is the depiction of analysis concept [12];



Figure 1. The van Dijk's Discourse analysis concept.

The aforementioned concept of discourse analysis by van Dijk's recognized as social cognition. Van Dijk's idea of discourse analysis discovered the idea between the connections of social structures with micro element

known as social cognition. Social cognition provides two insights; first in how the process of the texts produced by the writers, and how it elaborates the social conventions in certain community. In which the social conventions possess significant influence to the writer's knowledge or point of view. Van Dijk's discourse analysis not merely analysing the text, but also the practical production, in other words, the readers require to understand on how the text is created, so they would understand the reason. For example, the text it is about racial discrimination towards African American, so it demands an explanation why the text is delivered in such way, why the text must position African American to be discriminated. Van Dijk perceives the social structure, dominant, and power relation in the community, and he also sees discourses in three dimensions; text, social cognition, and social analysis.

To sum up, both text and contexts serve and require one another, text constructs contexts and context constructed by text. Text serves as primary understanding regarding the linguistics, educational, and socio-cultural aspects, and can be perceived everywhere, thus, a series of texts led to the construction of contexts. On the other hand, the contexts of linguistics, educational, and socio-cultural aspects would be able to comprehend by series of texts that sustain the understanding about them. Rogers (2004) also explicates the association of CDA and language, CDA framework is to construct and be constructed by contexts, as the discourses always encircle by contextual value of social, political, economical, cultural, even racial contexts.

Therefore, the researcher in CDA aims to discover the relation between the form and function of language while elaborating why and how the patterns are knotted each other's [11]. On the difficulties in teaching English skills during pandemic from English lecturers' perspectives in Indonesia, CDA has pivotal roles in discovering the idea of the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning and the methods to overcome the difficulties. The implementation of CDA grants the researcher an approach to investigate the idea of why and how the difficulty occurs from the English lecturers' perspectives and its' methods, and its' association to multiple contexts; linguistics, educational, and socio-cultural aspects.

2. METHODS

This research utilised survey design and undertaken quantitative approach as a method in establishing the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning from the perspectives of English lecturers, and the methods to overcome the difficulty. Afterwards, the researcher employs Critical Discourse Analysis to constitute an understanding of the results taken from the survey. 20 English lecturers and tutors from various regions in Indonesia were participating to be the participants of the research. They were chosen based on their occupation as English lecturers in universities,

and/or language courses in Indonesia. The instrument employed in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire initially required the participants to fill in their general information as English lecturers. Next, the questionnaire provides a selection of four English skills that require the participants to place them into first, second, third, and fourth. This selection indicates the difficulty level of teaching English skills during online learning, number one signifies the most difficult, and number four signifies the least difficult. Moreover, the participants were also required to elaborate reasons for the placement they made. In addition, the questionnaire also requires the participants to elaborate the methods to overcome the difficulty found in the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning.

In order to be able to collect the data, the researcher employed the following steps; first, determining potential participants based on occupation as English lecturers and tutors in universities and language courses in Indonesia, and request of grant consent regarding their availability to get involved in the research, and secondly, delivering the questionnaire to the participants. During the questionnaire, the researcher requires them to select the sequence of the English skills according to the difficulty level, the reasons of the difficulty level in teaching English skills during online learning, and the methods to overcome the difficulty of the most difficult ones.

The researcher employed Critical Discourse Analysis as the technique of data analysis. The questionnaire requires the English lecturers to decide the sequence of the first, second, third, and fourth English skills based on the difficulty level to teach during online learning. The researchers also would be able to gather the detailed information, and each English skill was also calculated of how often the English skills were placed as the first and the least difficult English skills to teach. Then, the researcher would be able to discover the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning, and the frequency of the English skills were then converted into percentage form in order to be displayed in the bar graph. The questionnaire also entailed the participants to elaborate the methods to overcome the difficulty in teaching the most difficult English skills during online learning.

3. FINDINGS

The researcher would like to elaborate findings of the research; the most difficult English skill to teach during online learning, and the methods to overcome it.

3.1. The most difficult English skill to teach during online learning

Based on the questionnaires delivered online to all of the respondents, the researcher found out the following

chart about the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning from the lecturers' perspectives;

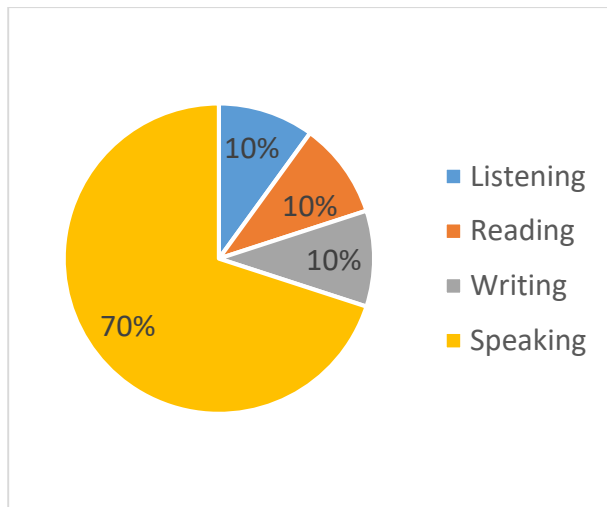


Figure 2. The most difficult English skills to teach during online learning

Based on those charts, the researcher was able to draw an understanding that majority of the respondents were having difficulty in teaching Speaking skills during online learning. Whilst Speaking regarded as the most difficult ones by majority of the respondents, the rest of the respondents considered teaching Writing, Listening, and Reading skills during online learning as the difficult ones. 70% of the respondents deemed Speaking as the most difficult outclasses Writing, Listening, and Reading share similar percentage; 10% each.

Based on the survey, the researcher discovered that speaking was regarded as the most difficult ones to teach during online learning due to certain features as follow.

First of all, limited online interaction between the students and the lecturers considered as one of the main issues found in teaching speaking during online learning. Some of the respondents clearly deemed that giving individual feedback for the performance of each student was challenging and requires amount of effort to personally grade their speaking ability. Since the students mostly at beginner level, the amount of time to personally grade and consulting them also increases. The respondent clearly stated that speaking is an activity that needs to be conducted face to face or by having direct and real-time interaction. Whilst giving assignment online, was deemed unable to provide full experiences in learning English compare to conventional meeting in the class. The student also must experience speaking in English with their peers to actively develop their speaking skills, according to one of the respondents. In addition, one of the respondents also stated that during online learning it was quite hard to manage the students to communicate and to interact to each other due to the time limit for each session. Besides, several respondents

also added that not all of the students possess reliable internet access, and gadgets to supports the applications used during online learning.

Next, the students' hesitation and lack of language proficiency was regarded as one of the issues found in teaching speaking during online learning. One of the respondents stated that the students were feeling shy when they are required to speak English in the online class. Notably, the students were more likely to hesitate because they would rather to think about the structure of the sentence first instead of talking spontaneously, or impromptu. Besides, the respondent also pointed out that the students' vocabulary level also quite limited, thus, the students were having difficulty in expressing their ideas in English.

3.2. Methods to overcome the difficult English skills

Besides asking the respondents to fill in the questionnaires about the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning, the researcher also requires the respondents to fill in the questionnaires about the methods on how to overcome the difficulty found during teaching the most difficult English skills during online learning. Majority of the respondents stated that speaking was the most challenging and difficult English skills to teach during online learning. Therefore, based on the questionnaire the researcher found out the methods to overcome difficulties in teaching speaking during online learning as mentioned below;

Firstly, the respondents were keen on utilising various online media as alternative. Besides using Canvas and Google Classroom as the primary Learning Management System (LMS), the respondents also utilised various online media such as, Youtube, Padlet, and WhatsApp. However, some of the students were having technical issues such as unreliable internet connection and under-performing gadgets. Yet, since most of the students already familiar with the use of Smartphone, using popular applications and most likely owned by majority of the students, such as WhatsApp group video or voice call, would likely to be effective ways of interacting with students in real time. Therefore, the respondents were using WhatsApp video or voice call to facilitate the students who were facing this issue. The students were also able to communicate with their peers or interact personally with the lecturer using these applications and the respondent or the lecturers would be able to provide personal consultation about the students' performance in speaking. According to the respondent, this way the students would have plenty of time to interact one to another, either with their peers or with their lecturers as well.

In addition, the respondents or the lecturers not only the sole sources of feedback, but also all of the students in the class were given opportunity to provide feedback to

their classmates. One of the solutions proposed by the respondents was giving all of the students in the class to provide feedback about the performance of their classmates in the comment bank, in which this feature not only can be found in the aforementioned LMS, but also in Youtube and Padlet. In order to work, the students in the speaking class were required to upload their recording, either video or voice recording, while speaking in English. Afterwards, the lecturers and their classmates would provide some feedback about their performance. However, for the students who are experiencing aforementioned technical issues, the respondents also allow them to provide feedback through the features on WhatsApp, such as texting on WhatsApp group, and conducting WhatsApp video or voice group calls. This way the students would have plenty of time to interact one to another whilst improving their Speaking skill.

4. DISCUSSION

Based on the premises found at the findings section, the researcher would be able to infer two notions regarding the most difficult English skill to teach during online learning and the methods employed to overcome the difficulties found in the most difficult English skill to teach during online learning. Firstly, the researcher discovered that 70% of the respondents deemed that speaking is the most difficult one to teach during online learning, this was due to several factors; limitation on online interaction, and the hesitation and lack of language proficiency of the students. In addition, in the questionnaire the researcher also inquired the methods employed by the respondents to overcome the difficulties found during teaching speaking, the researcher discovered that there were two methods devised by the respondents to overcome the difficulty on teaching speaking in online classes namely; using various online media as alternative, and providing feedback from the lecturers and the peers.

Speaking skill, according to the most of the respondents, deemed as the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning. Based on perspectives of language learners, among four language skills, speaking is believed as the most important and the most difficult language skills [13]. Speaking also was deemed as the most difficult ones also due to its' essential features that emphasized the importance of speaking to help people to communicate one to another, as well as exchanging ideas and sharing knowledge [14]. In fact, 70 % of the respondents regarded that this subject was the most difficult one and outclasses the other three with wide margin. The respondents' preferences that favour speaking as the most difficult one also due to the factors that there were two kinds of major problems in speaking that hinders the learning process which were linguistics and non-linguistics problems [15]. Based on that premiss, the researcher was keen on elaborating the difficulty of

teaching speaking in online learning based on the respondents' survey as follow.

First, limited online interaction between the students and the lecturers considered as one of the major issues that need to be addressed in speaking classes. Since online learning considered as the future of world education, the lecturers have a responsibility to find ways to ensure the engagement between the students and the lecturers to run smoothly as possible and to avoid negative perception regarding the course from the students [2]. In the context of speaking during online learning, since most of the students at the beginner level, they require extra attention and interaction from the lecturers in order to develop their growth in speaking. Although, however, during online interaction the lecturer had to provide feedback for each student and it was quite demanding, time-consuming and challenging. This was also due to the notion of online learning that requires both students and educators to perform online interaction which sometimes might defer real-time interaction, including the teaching and learning of speaking during online learning. In addition, the asynchronous nature of online courses means that feedback can be sporadic and delayed, which may hinder the thinking-writing dynamic[9]. Besides, the lecturers are highly advised to communicate all of the policies at the beginning of the course because students' expectations on feedback and assignments might differ, students may have inappropriate opinions regarding the feedback and may not take the assignments in serious manners [16]. Teaching speaking during online learning, thus, requires the cooperation of both the lecturers and the students to run smoothly, the lecturers have to keep reinforcing the online interactions whilst encouraging the students to get engaged in the class [2]. Not only by interacting to the lecturers, but also engaging with their classmates as well to create proper environment to develop their awareness in speaking, by practicing to speak in English with their peers the students would be able to improve their speaking skills through listening and repeating [13]. In addition, technical issues were regarded as a common obstacle during online learning, especially for developing and under developing areas. This was due to the access to reliable internet access and electricity, educational technologies are urgently needed in this digital era but they also regarded as the primary challenges of asserting educational prowess during digital era [17]. Since, technology are the foundation of online learning, it requires extra attention so teaching speaking during online learning will run smoothly.

Secondly, in the speaking classes, students' hesitation and lack of language proficiency tend to be the reasons of the students' low participation and interaction. In the recent years, although online learning has drawn global interest due to the various opportunities given to the faculty, students, and institutions [16], however, according to the respondents online learning in the

context of speaking classes also provides drawback which was the students' tend to hesitate that led to the low-rate of students' participation in the class. Hence, that premiss emerged due to the students' inhibition to speak up in English, fear of making mistakes and shyness to use English [18]. In addition, the respondents also pointed out that the students' hesitation to actively participating in a class was also due to their lack of language proficiency so the students tend to deeply considering the structure of the sentence rather than talking spontaneously. In addition, the students' lack of knowledge regarding the language may cause them to not be able to speak fluently and fully display their speaking prowess [13]. Regarding that premiss, during speaking the students have to consider certain important components such as pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, and understanding regarding the text, besides they also preferred to use their mother-tongue, in which those notions might hinder the students' growth in speaking class [13]. Therefore, the students' were getting discouraged and anxious to fully utilise their speaking ability because they were afraid of making mistakes and unable to convey their intentions or opinion, which eventually led to low-rate of students' participation.

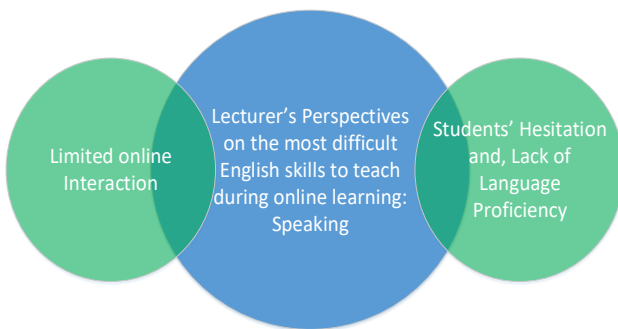


Figure 3. CDA's of Lecturers' Perspectives on the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning adapted from Van Dijk (1993).

Afterwards, the researcher also inquired about the methods regarding the respondents' perspective to overcome the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning, which was speaking. As one of language skills, speaking as the most difficult one to teach during online learning also requires methods to overcome the problems encountered by the educators in the classroom, the purpose of this was to assist the educator to achieve the objectives as well as to exhibit the students' progress in the speaking class [18]. Besides, engaging the students in online learning is equally important to conventional learning in the classroom, thus, the interaction during online learning also must provide solution to both of the educators and the students when they encountered any problems [2]. Therefore, due to that reasons the researcher keen on discovering the methods to overcome

the difficulty on teaching speaking in online classroom as follow.

First, the researcher found out that most of the respondent keen on using several alternatives on online media to facilitate the learning process. Since speaking was conducted to communicate and deliver messages verbally in English, real-time communication methods are required during online learning [13]. Therefore, providing multiple alternatives during online learning was one of the educators' concerns on improving students-lecturers' engagement during online learning [16]. However, the respondents also had to consider how to incorporating face-to-face settings into online learning especially in order for the students to benefit from online learning. More importantly, in order for the students to benefit from online learning, the students must be comfortable with the online medium [2]. In order words, the technology that utilised during online learning must be user friendly and easy to navigate; therefore, the respondents were not only keen on using certain LMS such as Canvas and Google Classroom, but also Youtube, Padlet, even WhatsApp.

The researcher also would like to point out that the respondents also considered on utilising alternative online medium such as WhatsApp, since some of the students' were encountering the technical issues such as unreliable internet connection, and inadequate gadgets. This was no wonder since most educational infrastructure in most countries was underfunded and overextended [19]. Therefore, the use of WhatsApp was considered as one of the appropriate methods to ensure the engagement between students and lecturers during online learning, and WhatsApp was already able to be accessed using mobile phones, and nowadays most of the students already owned mobile phones or Smartphone. Since during online learning students must be keep in touch with gadgets regularly, the use of WhatsApp and mobile devices also allow the students to learn at the most convenient ways since they were able to communicate, interact and collaborate with their lecturers and peers with ease while increasing their speaking prowess [2]. In addition, the use of mobile devices or mobile gadgets had been foreseen long ago to have the potential to increase the communication and interaction between lecturers and students, especially during online learning [2]. Therefore, the researcher was able to infer that the use of Whatsapp in the context of speaking class during online learning was to provide equal education for students, especially for those who reside in remote areas [19].

In order to constitute effective methods to overcome the difficulties in teaching speaking during online learning, the respondents deemed that lecturers' and peers' feedback was essential. Especially during online learning the use of technology may assist the lecturers to reduce the negative feedbacks among students regarding the shifting mode from face-to-face settings to online

learning which limit lecturers and students interaction [8]. Besides, there were lots of language learners that had not been able to speak appropriately and understandably although they already learned about English for so many years [13]. Therefore, speaking also required an environment that allows students to lecturers and students to students' interactive communicational activities, under the premiss of online learning, that also boost the students' opportunities to use words and phrases fluently with ease and spontaneously [13]. Basing on that premiss, lecturers and peers feedback on online medium was devised to increase the engagement between students and lecturers, thus, the online speaking course would be deemed effective due to the connection made between students and the lecturers [2]. In addition, students who earned regular feedback from the lecturers also display higher satisfactory levels and better academic progress compare to the students who earned limited and stern feedback [2].

Besides, by having peers' interactions, the students would enable the creation of community of learners that able support each other in online learning, whilst improving their speaking prowess. The students then would be able to get comfortable with online learning and improve their satisfactory level regarding the course, because practically the lecturers as learning facilitator were responsible for creating interactive and exciting experience asides from their role as one of the main sources for knowledge in online learning [1]. However, although online learning might offer tremendous benefits for students, the lecturers must be technologically savvy to accommodate the learning process, especially in giving feedback and facilitating students' interactions between each other. Since online learning should encourage students-centered learning and improve their collaboration in order to enhance students' learning experiences during online learning [2].

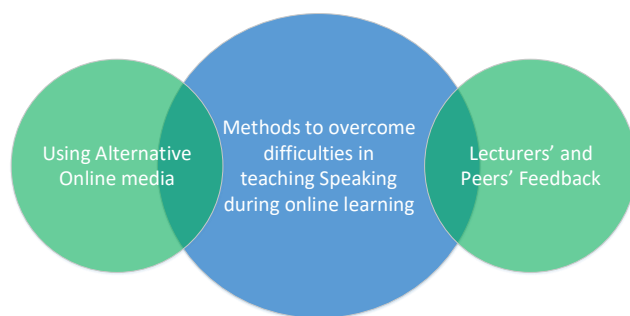


Figure 4. CDA's of the methods to overcome the difficulties in teaching Speaking during online learning adapted from Van Dijk (1993).

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The author contributed to all aspects to this work. The author gathered and analysed the data, and wrote the manuscript. By having only one author, there were no

decisions to make regarding author order or corresponding authorship. Therefore, the author approved to the final version of the manuscript and agree to be held accountable for the content therein.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the explanations above and the respondents' statements, the researcher were able to draw conclusions that Speaking was regarded as the most difficult English skills to teach during online learning due to certain factors; limited online interaction, students' hesitation and lack of language proficiency. However, the researcher also elaborated the methods to overcome the aforementioned difficulties as follow; using alternative online media, and having lecturers' and peers' feedback. The researchers also pointed out that teaching speaking during online learning due to Covid-19 was not effective, this ineffectiveness mainly due to the technical issues, unreliable internet and under-performing gadgets, that hinder the interaction between the lecturers and the students during online learning. Besides as a means of providing feedback to the students, the researcher also discovered that the respondents preferred to use WhatsApp as alternative in accommodating students' interactions in speaking classes. However, the researcher also urges for thorough research to extrapolate the intricate patterns that differentiate the teaching and learning of productive and passive skills during online learning since it may provide abrupt challenges since online learning still considered relatively new to educators and students. In addition, students' perspectives also need to be taken into account to constitute better understanding regarding the most difficult English skills to learn during online learning.

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