

# Reflecting on EFL Digital Learning in Indonesia: Seeking for E-Learning Pedagogy

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## ABSTRACT

At this time, the entire world, including Indonesia, is influenced by digital technology, specifically the internet and the world wide web. Online applications for learning is now more innovative and accessible yet teaching methodology through digital platforms is still in its infancy. At this stage, collective sharing of EFL practitioners have become models for EFL teachers in Indonesia. The present purpose of this paper, therefore, is to reflect on the culture of EFL digital learning from the current various practices in the country as a prompt response to learning from the 4.0 revolution era amidst pandemic competing to 5.0 society. This study also investigates the underpinning e-learning pedagogy which is taken into account for EFL methodology as the attempt to collectively gain insights on the digital teaching methodology. Reviewing studies from Indonesia, the findings reveal that collaboration is the most prevalent culture of digital learning through the reinforcement of “Freedom to Learn” program. Social-constructivist approach has been addressed through many techniques including inquiry, numerous interpretations, and collaborative tasks, while other additions are discussed in the present conceptual paper. The analysis recommends a need of revisiting EFL e-learning in Indonesia by exploring the recent trends and a demand of the e-learning and teaching methodology for EFL teachers aiming at ideal outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Culture, Digitalized, Pedagogy, Constructivist, Collaboration*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, the second largest user of smartphones worldwide, is facing the challenge to make economic progress from its technology advancement. This is following the Global Creativity Index's rank of 115 out of 139 countries [1]. Indonesian education system should have played a pivotal role in introducing technology innovations. However, issues regarding Indonesian education still rests on digital learning in a sudden shift. Challenges for platforming e-learning practices underlies teachers' limited capacity to run digital program for the country's agendas [2].

Over the past five years, voices addressing Indonesian university teachers to be creative and innovative have long been echoed [1]; however, the complexity seems to hinder the digital advancement of the country's education. Once the deadly persistent Covid-19 strikes, Whether they are ready or not, university lecturers in Indonesia must re-navigate their

teaching using digital apps [3] while nurturing the spirit of online learning as a routine [4]. Nevertheless, the teachers' roles to facilitate learning is at an alarming level, regardless of the fact that it has positioned Indonesia as the worldwide second highest rank of smartphone use [5].

Digitizing EFL learning in Indonesia schematizes the trends. With learning from home, concepts of conventional learning approach have been revolutionized into e-learning whose fast pace made the e-learning moving forward simultaneously as the Covid-19 pandemic worsened. On the other hand, Hockly and Dudeney's [6] study proves that the advance of technology revolution has impacted teachers' pedagogical matters. In this context, access to digital means for education no longer rested on one single aspect. Indeed, teaching and learning practice utilizing digital access should consider the gaps between Indonesian EFL teachers and students at real practice

[7]. Based on these assumptions, the motion of understanding ways of digital learning of EFL entails the idea to unlock the context of its country's present situation. This study, therefore, seeks to lay out two main themes under the discussion, namely the culture of digital learning of EFL in Indonesia from the current practice and e-learning pedagogy underpinning the online methodology in the country.

As practitioners, we have experienced the transition from conventional learning to digital learning of EFL in Indonesia, which is reflected in current learning practices, i.e., averagely Indonesia students spend 6-7 hours a day on smartphone use for learning [7]. Since teacher's everyday teaching and learning routines are, now, running on the track of long-distance platforms, then, the understanding of the culture of digital learning in EFL practices becomes necessary [4]. To put it another way, the reflection of the digital learning practices may come as a pedagogical nuance.

Inspired by the social-constructivism approach [2], [5], [8]–[12], it is found from overall Indonesia EFL context that the country's pattern of learning is contributed by acceleration of digital learning during the sudden pandemic [13]–[15]. In Indonesia EFL context of learning transition from offline mode to online mode, such great efforts paid to hybrid learning, to slowly progress to blended learning [13]. Li [16] introduced a model design of blended learning for instructional transformation as it promotes different activating learning strategies. Yet, due to limited facilities and internet access, only a few places in the country could afford to deliver fully virtual learning. Teachers and/or practitioners in the country have developed various models of online learning in the quick shift between the learning modes. For this respect, it is important to reveal how the Indonesia EFL current practices as manifested from the country's culture of digital learning.

### ***1.1. The Culture of Digital Learning of EFL in Indonesia: Current Practices***

Indonesia is facing national new trend of hybrid or blended learning upto to virtual learning following the global disruptive spread of coronavirus. In response to this, the Indonesia government on the early of 2021 released Kampus Merdeka (Creative University) Curriculum. The literal meaning of Kampus Merdeka is Free Campus. This section views the common picture of EFL digital learning for Higher Education (HE) in Indonesia in general.

#### ***1.1.1. 'Kampus Merdeka' (Creative University) Curriculum of Indonesia***

Freire [17] claimed that there is no education truly free from political intervention and the tenet of critical pedagogy is connecting education and pre-designed

condition surrounding teachers and students. Prahari et al further explained the curriculum welcomes HE new initiatives while students can decide their preferred fields of on-the-job-training, service learning and community service with 20 upto 40 credit hours beyond their colleges or universities. In line with the recent curriculum, some years earlier Kwedlju [1] has challenged whether HE leadership can be creative in preparing graduates to enter the creative class of workforce. She emphasized the third-generation creativity involves the social-ecological worldview, ethics, and interdisciplinary approach, capability approach, cosmopolitanism, promoting EFL.

#### ***1.1.2. Social-Constructivism and Students Active Participation***

Through social-constructivism, mutual positive relationship among teachers and students is created, and consequently this influences students to experience task-based learning, intentional cooperative activities, cohesive and related-life learning, as well as using relevant, critical, negotiable learning, all with the support of their teachers [10]. The students creativity as mentioned previously need also to have space and time for exploration while their active participation and efforts are strongly expected within this new emergent context of learning.

### ***1.2. E-Learning Pedagogies Underpinning Online Methodology***

It has been questioned by many about what exactly the appropriate online methodology to offer to EFL teachers is. In grasping the answer, EFL teachers of Indonesia, at the grass-root level are on the learning stage replicating models of online teaching from other EFL practioners while endeavouring possible ways for smooth online learning for their own context.

#### ***1.2.1. Phenomena of New Emerging Sudden Shift of Classroom***

E-learning is a cognitive process through social interaction with other students through digital platforms, in which sounds, images, videos, and any texts are digitally constructed or even presented as augmented reality. Students' reactions towards e-communication tools may vary as the new emerging online learning shocks [17] some unprepared students [4], [18] and creates the loss of 'direct' speak communication [19]. Thus, individual support is crucial to assist e-learning participants [20], for there is tendency of lacking manuals for the e-learning platforms. Vygotsky's Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) is well known for problem solving on the part of the learners at their level of potential development under an expert's or a teacher's guidance (called : scaffolding), beside building rapport among e-learning students by increasing the social, cognitive and teaching presence [20]. For this

reason, Schuler [20] encouraged teachers to give students tutorials about the use of technological devices or communication devices while providing supportive feedback and about how to receive it. Feedback functions to lead students as self-efficacious learning participants. The case of Germany student-teachers lacking IT skills [20] is an alarm for such training, especially for teachers as well as for students with investment of time [19]. Likewise, there are students with limited access to technology [18]. A kind of training on utilizing digital tools is recommended to familiarize them with the technology prior to using it [19]. This situation indeed happens in some areas of Indonesia.

At least, there are eight categories of online platforms for learning, namely LMS; chatting and texting; tele-video meeting; blogging; learning and assessing; live streaming; virtual learning maker; supplement resources [13]. Online course is better served to meet students' expectations and capabilities by using mixed digital platforms e.g. video conference, in combination with social media and messengers [21], out of plenty digital tools that facilitate self-regulated learning [20].

One of the last aspects to think of, but not the least, is dealing with mobile learning assessment. How the students' multimodal learning progress is monitored and negotiated by implementing sociocultural perspectives on learning and assessment, i.e., using a marking criterion which aims at accomplishing the goal of the task [22]. This power relation between teachers and students is more lenient than in the past of conventional learning. It is now to open negotiation and responsibility on the part of students, which by the end of the day paid off by the possibility of enhanced learning.

### *1.2.2. E-learning Methodology and Pedagogical Approach*

However, there is a gap between the negative perception of traditional education transition and the stable positive student reaction on online programs, which is better explained with their satisfaction over the conventional digital communication and interactional tools [21]. Teachers, on the other hand, are in the early infancy of assessing students' learning from multimodal teaching. The investigation on multimodal assessment has not yet extensively explored [20]. According to Prahani et al, in this context, teachers' freedom of thought should precede those of the students' innovative thinking. Since the contents of digital learning are sometimes unpredictable due to the interesting aspects of the designs, students should be accustomed to think outside the box.

Intellectual activities, knowledge promotion, as well as experience changing are digitized and created into a digital platform more easily. Yet for the efficiency, the

learning interaction should have social integration and psychological side of the student cognition domain [21]. Putri [9] incorporated a modified genre approach for digital storytelling (DST) for EFL students by allowing the students to get familiarized DST followed by scaffolding the students' collaboration for story construction while at the same time providing necessary equipment. At the end of her DST procedures, the students shared their story in circles of peer-students. Betaubun, et al. [11] integrated digital tools with local wisdom of Indonesia. This innovative idea might help the students a lot by addressing familiar context, e.g., across cultural topics [12], before proceeding to a higher thinking level.

Having presented several previous studies from Indonesia EFL setting, it is clear that communicative language teaching has been the atmosphere of e-learning in combination with direct method whereby English is the medium/ language of the instruction. Having situated so, the generation of students, which are technological savvy, automatically made use of any available resources provided to them, not only to negotiate meanings but also to collect knowledge through digital tools. Video, interactive talk, music, and other features of digital tools for e-learning are also employed in the Suggestopedia method, a method which is not so common among the conventional EFL learning - the students' mood is induced and boosted whilst learning by audio, music, and rhythm [5]. Collaboration of any kind is best practiced within the country e-learning with varied levels of contribution either direct or indirect, which is interpreted from the social constructivism approach underlying the strategy. Take for example, how constructivism is underpinning e-learning from interactive and symmetrical relationships between students and artificial intelligence of digital tools [23]. Essentially, Koole's [12] proposal for mobile learning urges rational analysis that covers gadgets (mobile-compatible technology), virtual learning context, social interaction, along with social-content resources, in order to serve sustainable e-learning.

## **2. CONCLUSIONS**

E-learning combines various learning methods without discretely separating one method from the others. It is more likely a holistic learning comprising interrelated methods for the new online emerging lesson starting on a pandemic [24]. Constructivism approach of pedagogy underpins e-learning, since students observe the world from their own perspectives while at the same time, they immerse into social cognition interaction through visual platforms. They form and re-format their own knowledge from observation and interaction. Collaboration as part of learning has been commonly practiced among e-learning models - into small or big

groups, pairwork, though self-regulated attitudes of students are highly required during the e-learning because of the absence of teachers' physical presence on the spot.

### 3. SUGGESTIONS

Intellectual activities, together with innovative ideas, life-changing experience are re-formatted into a virtual learning zone feasibly. However, the learning should welcome social interaction and address learners' psychological part of their cognition [21]. The analysis shows the needs of revisiting EFL e-learning in Indonesia by exploring the recent trends and a demand of EFL e-learning methodology for EFL teachers of Indonesia aiming at ideal outcomes. E-learning assessment is another determining factor for evaluation on the whole process, and the format is still on the quest to be resolved by all parties within Indonesia EFL context.

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