

Designing Online English Language Learning and Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract— the Covid-19 pandemic insists face-to-face learning on campus be switched to online or e-learning. However, radical changes are challenging for both educators and students. Besides, conventional learning and teaching used for decades are more preferable. In addition, the selections of the media used in learning activities and learning design are also significant. This study aims at finding students' perspectives (preferences) and suggestions about the implementation of online English learning and teaching during the covid-19 pandemic. The participants of the study were 54 Language Department students at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis. The research was conducted in a descriptive method. Data and information were gathered through a 5-point Likert scale Google form survey adapted from [9]. The questionnaire covered students' technical condition, students' technical skills / learning styles, lecturers' technical skills / teaching styles, student's ability to assimilate and learn while learning online. The data were analyzed using Statistical analysis application; The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to provide descriptive statistics. The study discovered that video conference platforms are the most preferable in online learning, and live video conference and discussion on chat/forums were the most favorable ones. Having video conferences promote better information processing, while information processing is harder in non-conference online platforms. It was also found that the satisfaction level toward online learning is low; face-to-face learning is still the most favorable. In addition, improvement on students' technical condition, students' technical skills / learning styles, lecturers' technical skills / teaching styles are still needed. Therefore, appropriate utilization of video conference and forum discussion is a necessity. Finally, it is recommended to provide both lecturers' and students' training programs to promote better online learning and teaching. Moreover, it is also suggested to add frequency (duration) of video conference meeting and simplify assignments given.

Keywords—online learning, preferences

I. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has led to school closures around the globe. It provides limited options to educational institutions, educators, and governments. Stakeholders insist that classroom teaching be replaced by online learning or students must learn from their homes. Using online media-based activities in teaching and learning is alternative learning in this situation. Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, and Whatsapp, YouTube applications are among the most popular platforms used since the outbreak occurred last year. However, educators are still working hard to find interactive activities that enable students to learn through various features of media used during the study.

Online learning or so-called e-learning is not a new matter. Yet, Implementations of online learning with e-learning platforms in the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis is challenging at the beginning. E-learning platforms had not been used in language learning and teaching practice at the campus before. This leads to the longer time needed to adapt to the learning process. Interactions occur when lecturers post assignments, share and comments on related topics and guide students in discussion, presentation activities. [5] found that students found learning with an instructor to be much more effective than studying alone in an online environment. Classroom environment is more preferred to an online setting for language learning. However, it is crucial that students and lecturers can adjust learning and teaching styles with these platforms in learning activities.

Media, Apps and Language Learning

Several studies on the effectiveness of online learning have been conducted by researchers. Most results revealed that online learning is still supplementary activities of whole learning process. [4], and [2] suggest that that distance (online) learning must be combined with physical presence (blended learning), it optimizes the effectiveness of the educational process. Similarly, [1] also found that

students who have limited time for real English communication can be encouraged to use the Internet to improve their English communication skills.

A study on the application of online learning to universities level students has been carried out by [6]. The research explored the experiences of English students at the Bengkalis State Polytechnic in using smartphones and attitudes towards using smartphones for the purpose of learning English. The result showed that smart phones were quite used for language learning purposes by students only for checking dictionaries or translators and listening practice. However, the attitude of the respondents towards mobile language learning is high. In addition, Social media have been used to motivate students to improve their English skills. A study conducted by [3] at the English Language Center, Hong Kong Polytechnic University showed that social media were used as a motivating factor for improvement in English language and cultural skills of the learners.

Most results of the studies indicated that implementation of online learning was still additional to classroom learning. It can be inferred that both lecturers and students are still finding best way to implement this as main program during pandemic situation. In order to optimize the process of teaching and learning, there is a need for a study on students' preferences and the implementation of online learning using various platforms. The findings of this study can be a reference in selecting platforms of online learning media and organizing procedures of learning. Appropriate usage of these platforms determines the quality of learning. The result of the study is students' preferences for online learning as well as the design of suitable English online learning. It is expected that it could lead to an effective learning procedure guide.

II. METHOD

The purposes of the research were to explore EFL students' perspectives (preferences) towards online EFL language learning and teaching and to provide suggestions about the implementation of online English learning and teaching during the covid-19 pandemic. To achieve the research purposes and provide the answer to the question, a descriptive research framework was selected using a survey method. The participants of this study were 54 students of the Language Department of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis consisting of 13 males and 41 females from two study programs; 36 students from the D3 English study program and 18 students from English for Business and Professional Communication study program.

For collecting the data, a closed-ended and open-ended questionnaire was distributed to each group participant to capture their perspectives. An electronic survey was used to collect the data since it

is a good alternative to use during pandemic. The current study made use of the questionnaire adapted from [9]. All items in the questionnaire were organized and classified under 4 different groups as shown in **Table 1**. A 5-point Likert scale with five categories (1= never or almost never true of me, 2= rarely or usually not true of me, 3= somewhat true of me, 4= usually true of me, and 5= always or almost always true of me) was administered for students' technical conditions, students' technical skills/learning styles, and lecturers technical skills/teaching styles categories. While, for student's ability to assimilate and learn while learning online categories, preferences for student-lecturer interaction(live, written, audio, not answering), presenting projects online (harder, easier, neutral), processing information (audio, video, forums/chats), online information processing (easier, harder, the same), opinion towards online learning (5-point Likert scale, where 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied), opinion towards the use of the online environment for learning (5-point Likert scale, where 1 = to a very small extent, 5 = to a very great extent), preference for future learning in higher education (online, face to face, a combination between online and offline-hybrid), preferences for platforms used in EFL teaching (video conference, learning management system, and social media messenger), preferences for EFL courses structure (live conference and discussion, live conference and forum/chat discussion, recorded video and forum/chat discussion, and LMS and live discussion). These item data were analyzed using Statistical analysis was carried out using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to provide descriptive statistics such as item means, standard deviations, and response frequencies and percentages.

Table 1

Categories of EFL perspectives toward EFL Learning and Teaching

No	Categories	Items
1	Students' Technical Conditions	4 items
2	Students' Technical Skills/Learning Styles	4 items
3	Lecturers Technical Skills/Teaching Styles	9 items
4	Student's Ability to Assimilate and Learn while learning online	8 items

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2
Students' Technical Conditions

No	StateMent	VFq	Fq	NFq, NR	R	N	Mean	DS
		F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)		
1	I got difficulties while connecting to the online learning platforms	5 (9.3%)	8 (14.8%)	30 (55.6%)	8 (14.8%)	3 (5.6%)	3.074	0.949
2	I lose signal during the courses/seminars	11 (20.4%)	8 (14.8%)	26 (48.1%)	7 (13.0%)	2 (3.7%)	3.352	1.067
3	I have delayed visualization of messages communicated on the platforms	4 (7.4%)	14 (25.9%)	18 (33.3%)	12 (22.2%)	6 (11.1%)	2.963	1.115
4	The sound, image and video are not clear (there are interruptions)	4 (7.4%)	11 (20.4%)	24 (44.4%)	13 (24.1%)	2 (3.7%)	3.037	0.951
	Total						3.107	1.027

Notes: VFq: Very Frequently, Fq: Frequently, NFqNR: Nor Frequently nor Rarely, R: Rarely, N: Never, F: Frequency, P: Percentage

In terms of students' technical conditions, in connecting to online learning platforms, 26.1 % of respondents frequently and very frequently experienced difficulties while connecting to the online learning platforms. While the majority of respondents (55.6%) stated that they nor frequently nor rarely got that problem. Moreover, those who rarely and never got a problem connecting to the online learning platforms were 14.8% and 5.6 % respectively. Dealing with signal, 35.2% of respondents frequently and very frequently lose signal during the course/seminar, while the majority neither answered nor frequently nor rarely got that problem (48.1%). Only a smaller percentage (16.7%) of them rarely and never faced it and experienced it.

In the visualization of the message, a third of students (33.3%) frequently and very frequently faced delayed visualization of messages communicated on the platforms. The majority of the students or a third of them (33.3%) nor frequently nor rarely experienced it. Those who are rarely and never got those problems were 22.2 % and 11.1% respectively. In addition, Having unclear sound, image, and video or having interruptions during the course or seminar frequently and very frequently faced by respondents (28.2%). The majority of them (44.4%) nor frequently or nor rarely faced it. Another 24.1% rarely faced it, while the rest (3.7%) never had it.

In short, the majority of students sometimes faced difficulties connecting to online learning platforms, losing signal during the course/seminar, having delayed visualization, and having interruptions during the course. The highest frequency of technical condition difficulties faced by the students was losing signal during the courses/seminars (M=3.352, SD=1.067). These findings are congruent with the

findings of [7] who found that many students at the University of Jordan experienced unreliable internet connections and slow e-learning platforms and services. Moreover, the majority of respondents (69.4%) complained that they frequently and very frequently encountered technical problems with the platforms connecting to the platform provided by the universities (signal loss, delayed viewing of messages, the sound was not clear) [9]. [11] also found that internet most of the students strongly agreed that the internet connection is very poor which makes online learning very hard for most the students

Table 3
Students' technical skills/learning style

No	StateMent	VFq	Fq	NFq, NR	R	N	Mean	DS
		F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)		
1	I am not motivated to learn online	9 (16.7%)	6 (11.1%)	21 (38.9%)	10 (18.5%)	8 (14.8%)	2.962	1.27
2	I cannot focus in an online learning environment and cannot avoid distractions	10 (18.5%)	12 (22.2%)	18 (33.3%)	12 (22.2%)	2 (3.7%)	3.302	1.137
3	I have poor time management skills, which affect my online learning capabilities	8 (14.8%)	9 (16.7%)	20 (37.0%)	9 (16.7%)	8 (14.8%)	3	1.256
4	I have poor ICT skills in using online learning platforms (e.g: Google classroom, zoom or other apps), which affect my online learning	4 (7.4%)	4 (7.4%)	17 (31.5%)	10 (18.5%)	19 (35.2%)	2.321	1.252
	Total						2.896	1.273

Note: VFq: Very Frequently, Fq: Frequently, NFqNR: Nor Frequently nor Rarely, R: Rarely, N: Never, F: Frequency, P: Percentage

Regarding motivation to learn online, 27.8 % of respondents frequently and very frequently faced unmotivated to learn online (Mean=2.962). Furthermore, 30.7 of respondents reported that they frequently and very frequently could not focus in an online learning environment and cannot avoid distractions, which is the highest mean of 3.302. This indicates that it was the biggest problem faced by the students during online EFL learning. This is consistent with the findings of [7] who reported 41.6% of students having a lack of motivation (m = 3.11), and 49.4% of respondents said they experienced difficulties focusing on online learning (m = 3.36).

Moreover, 31.5% of the respondents' frequently and very frequently faced poor time management skills, which affect their online learning capabilities. The highest percentage among all (37.0%) of them nor frequently nor rarely faced it (mean=3, SD=1.256). This finding is in line with the finding of [7] who reported poor time management skills faced

by the students (57.3%, M=3.47). In addition, only 14.8% of the respondents reported frequently and very frequently faced having poor ICT skills in using online learning platforms (Mean= 2.321, SD=1.252). This indicates that most of the students have already had good ICT skills in using the online learning platforms. This finding is In contrast with the finding of [7] and [11]. A study by [7] found that 42.9% of respondents reported poor ICT skills and 37% said they had insufficient technical guidance on how to use the internet. [11] also found that most of the students find difficulty in using Google meet or other online programs (M=3.8).

Table 4
Lecturers Technical Skills/Teaching style

No	StateMent	VFq	Fq	NFqNR	R	N	Mean	DS
		F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)	F (P)		
1	Lack of interaction with peers/lecturers during online language teaching and learning	6 (11.1%)	17 (31.5%)	12 (22.2%)	11 (20.4%)	8 (14.8%)	3.037	1.258
2	Lack of adaptation of teaching style or strategies for the online environment	8 (14.8%)	12 (22.2%)	19 (35.2%)	7 (13.0%)	8 (14.8%)	3.094	1.26
3	Lack of clearly formulated requirements/ instructions	6 (11.1%)	12 (22.2%)	16 (29.6%)	13 (24.1%)	7 (13.0%)	2.944	1.204
4	Lack of ability to maintain students' attention in online language teaching	6 (11.1%)	10 (18.5%)	18 (33.3%)	10 (18.5%)	10 (18.5%)	2.852	1.25
5	Lack of support from lecturers in the online learning process	7 (13.0%)	8 (14.8%)	11 (20.4%)	9 (16.7%)	19 (35.2%)	2.537	1.437
6	The classes do not start or end at the established time	6 (11.1%)	8 (14.8%)	23 (42.6%)	10 (18.5%)	7 (13.0%)	2.926	1.147
7	The assessment and evaluation methods are not suitable	4 (7.4%)	9 (16.7%)	17 (31.5%)	7 (13.0%)	17 (31.5%)	2.556	1.298
8	The structure of the courses taught online, contains more theory than practical	13 (24.1%)	15 (27.8%)	11 (20.4%)	10 (18.5%)	5 (9.3%)	3.389	1.295
9	Ever since courses / seminars began to be held online, I have less time for individual study and project preparation:	8 (14.8%)	10 (18.5%)	16 (29.1%)	13 (24.1%)	7 (13.0%)	2.982	1.251
	Total						2.299	1.283

Note: VFq: Very Frequently, Fq: Frequently, NFqNR: Nor Frequently nor Rarely, R: Rarely, N: Never, F: Frequency, P: Percentage

Regarding online learning interaction, 42.6 % of respondents reported frequently experience having lack of interaction with peers/lecturers during online language teaching and learning. Students feel isolated

because of the lack of interaction, especially with lecturers, because they spend more time inside, in front of the computer, a study has found. [9] found that students were affected by the absence of interaction with both lecturers and peers. [11] found that most of the students agreed that Interaction with instructors in online classes is less than interaction in face-to-face classes with a mean of 2.02. Moreover, [10] found there is a need for quality and timely interaction between student and professor in online classes during Covid 19)

Dealing with an adaptation of teaching style, 36.8% of respondents stated that they frequently faced a lack of adaptation of teaching style or strategies for the online environment. A study by [9] found that 22.5% of students mentioned that lack of adaptation of the teaching style to the online environment has negative impacts on their ability to assimilate and understand the subjects taught during the courses. Furthermore, regarding requirements/ instructions during EFL teaching, a third of respondents (33.3) reported that they frequently experienced a Lack of clearly formulated requirements/ instructions from the instructors. Maintaining students' attention in online EFL teaching, 29.6% of respondents reported that they frequently found the lack of ability of instructors to maintain students' attention in online language teaching. 27.8% of respondents reported frequently having a lack of support from lecturers in the online learning process. [11] also found that most of the students agreed that students and instructors were not trained enough to teach or learn in online classes which resulted in taking online classes to be less satisfied for both students and instructor.

In terms of punctuality, 29.9% of respondents reported frequently experienced that the classes did not start or ended at the established time. A study by [9] found that 32.8% of respondents declared that lecturers did not give breaks and classes did not start or end at the established hours.

In assessment and evaluation, 24.1% of respondents reported that they frequently found the unsuitability of the assessment and evaluation used, while 43.5% reported that assessment and evaluation used were objectives. It is incongruent with [10] that found that the assessment and evaluation done were fair and objective.

Regarding on The structure of the courses taught online, the majority of respondents (51.9%) of respondents reported that they frequently experience the courses were more theory than practical. It is in line with the findings of [9] who found that the contents of the courses were 65% theoretical.

33.3 % of respondents reported that they frequently have less time for individual study and project preparation since courses/seminars began to be held online. [10] found a much higher percentage

of the students who reported that they were always given much homework (60%).

In short, the structure of the courses taught online, which contains more theory than practical is the highest mean of all (M=3.389). Besides, the percentage of those who frequently and very frequently experience it was higher than the percentage of other categories.

Lack of adaptation of teaching style or strategies for the online environment (Mean=3.094), which is the second-highest mean of all categories. With the percentage of those who frequently and very frequently faced it was 36.8%. Lack of interaction with peers/lecturers during online language teaching and learning (Mean=3.037) which is the third-highest mean, while the percentage of those who frequently and very frequently experience it was 42.6%. In contrast, the assessment and support from the instructors were the lowest means of all, 2.556 and 2.557 respectively.

Table 5
Frequency distribution of indicators related to student's ability to assimilate and learn while learning online

1	Interaction with lecturers	a. Answer live during a video conference	22 (40.7%)
		b. Offer a written answer on forum/chat	25 (46.3%)
		c. Answer using audio	4 (7.4%)
		d. I don't know/I'm not answering	3 (5.6%)
2	Presentation of seminar projects/exercises online	a. You find it harder to present project online	22 (40.7%)
		b. You find it easier to present project online	16 (29.6%)
		c. You find it not easier, nor harder to present project online	16 (29.6%)
3	Processing information is easier when	a. The course is held audio	3 (5.6%)
		b. The course is held with video and audio	38 (70.3%)
		c. The course develops in writing, on forums/chats	13 (24.1%)
4	Compared to offline teaching/ face-to-face taught courses/seminars, online information processing is	a. easier	7 (13.0%)
		b. harder	31 (57.4%)
		c. the same	16 (29.6%)
5	General opinion towards learning in the online environment	a. Very dissatisfied	8 (14.8%)
		b. dissatisfied	12 (22.2%)
		c. Neutral	28 (51.9%)
		d. Satisfied	4 (7.4%)
		e. Very satisfied	2 (3.7%)

6	The online environment is appropriate for learning	a. in a very small extent	6 (11.1%)
		b. in a small extent	11 (20.4%)
		c. nor in small, nor in great extent	24 (44.4%)
		d. in great extent	12 (22.2%)
		e. in very great extent	1 (1.9%)
7	Preference for online learning	a. For the courses/seminars to be held online	3 (5.6%)
		b. For the courses/seminars to be held face to face	26 (48.1%)
		c. A combination between online and offline courses/seminars	22 (40.7%)
		d. I don't know/I'm not answering	3 (5.6%)
8	Preference for the platforms in online language teaching	a. Video Conferences platforms (Skype, Zoom, Cisco WebEx Meeting, Google Meet/Hangout, and Microsoft Teams)	35 (64.8%)
		b. Learning management systems (LMS) platforms: Google Classroom, Blackboard, MOODLE, Canvas	7 (13.0%)
		c. Social media/ mobile messenger platforms : WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Youtube	12 (22.2%)
9	Ideal online English language course format	a. live video conference and discussion through the video conference	21 (38.9%)
		b. live short video conference, then discussion in the forum/chat	11 (20.4%)

Regarding students' perspectives on student-lecturer interaction, the majority of respondents (46.3%) preferred to offer a written answer on forum/chat, 40.7 % preferred to answer live during a video conference. Only 7.4% preferred to answer using audio, and the rest 5.6% did not know / did not answer. It is congruent with [9] finding (2021) who reported that the vast majority of students prefer to interact more with lecturers in writing, on chat/forum (52.4%), and prefer to use the microphone less.

Presenting projects online becomes challenging for students. The majority of respondents (40.7%) found it harder to present the project online. 29.6% found it easier, and the rest 29.6% found it nor easier, nor harder to present a project online. [9] also found that presenting seminar projects is even more difficult in the online environment (32.9%).

In processing the information transmitted by the lecturer, in the online environment, the majority of respondents (70.3% found it easier to process information when the course is held with video and audio. Another 24.1% found it easier to process the information when the course develops in writing, on forums/chats. Only 5.6% found that it is easier to process information when it is held audio. It is in line with [9] who found that the courses held in a videoconferencing system would increase the degree of understanding and information processing (73%).

Online information processing is also challenging for students. Most of the respondents (57.4%) stated that it was harder to do online information processing compared to offline courses. 29.6% stated that they were the same. Only 13.0% stated that online information processing was easier. It is also in line with finding that processing information is more difficult in the E-learning system (60.5%) [9] (2020).

Regarding the satisfaction of the respondents toward the online teaching system on the E-learning platform, only 11.1% felt satisfied+ very satisfied

with it. The majority of the 51.9% were neutral. The percentage of those who were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied was 36.8%, much higher than the percentage of those satisfied + dissatisfied. In contrast, [9] found the percentage of those very satisfied and satisfied by the E-learning process much higher (39.1%), 31.9% were undecided, and only 29% were dissatisfied. Students that were more open to the use of the online environment for the teaching-learning process in general, had a higher degree of satisfaction with their exclusively online learning experience during the pandemic. Students that were more open to the use of the online environment for the teaching-learning process in general, had a higher degree of satisfaction with their exclusively online learning experience during the pandemic. [9] found that students who used the internet as their primary source of learning were more likely to be satisfied with their grades.

The suitability of online environment for education and training, 31.5% respondents considered it in a very small and small extent suitable for education and training. 44.4% of the respondents considered it nor in small, nor in a great extent. 24.1% of them considered it in great and very great extent. Students' views on whether or not their school is suitable for learning vary from one person to another, according to a study by [9] found that some of the students consider it an appropriate environment for learning (37.4%) to be very unsuitable (32.8%) or not at all (30.6%).

The majority of students would prefer the teaching/learning process to take place face-to-face (48.1%) and a combination of online and offline (40.7%) rather than exclusively online (5.6%) - this is congruent with a study carried out by [9] who found, 48.1% of students wanted their teacher to be in person and 41.3% would choose an online or offline combination of the two. 10.6% would prefer exclusively online learning/teaching.

Most students prefer to use Video Conferences platforms (Skype, Zoom, Cisco WebEx Meeting, Google Meet/Hangout, and Microsoft Teams) for online language teaching, according to a survey conducted by the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Canadian Institute for Advanced Learning (CAL). 13.0 % preferred learning management systems (LMS) platforms, and 22.2 % preferred Social media/ mobile messenger platforms.

Cisco WebEx video conferencing, one of the video conference platforms, received the highest score in authenticity which indicates that the student-participants felt Cisco WebEx help them learn using the real language for communication. The finding is congruent with [8] who found that Cisco webEx helped students learn how to use English as a second language.

Regarding the structure of the course, 38.9 % of respondents preferred live video conferences and discussions through video conferences. 20.4% preferred live short video conference, then discussion in the forum/chat. 20.4% Preferred recorded teaching videos/materials submitted/upload in the platform/social media, then discussion on forum/chat. The rest 20.4% of the learning materials were uploaded into e-learning platforms and discussion through video conferences.

IV. CONCLUSION

Current outbreak forced sudden adjustment in teaching learning process. However, both students and lecturers seem to be not ready to involve in it. The descriptive study tried to explore students' perspectives (preferences) and provide recommendation to maximize online English learning and teaching during the covid-19 pandemic. The researchers questioned 54 Language Department students at the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis with a 5-point Likert scale Google form survey adapted from [9]. The statistical data from The Statistical Package Social Sciences (SPSS) application revealed that video conference platforms are the most preferable in online learning, and live video conference and discussion on chat/forums were the most favorable ones. It was also found that the satisfaction level toward online learning is low; face-to-face learning is still the most favorable. In addition, improvement on students' technical condition, students' technical skills / learning styles, lecturers' technical skills / teaching styles are still needed. Therefore, appropriate utilization of video conference and forum discussion is a necessity. Finally, it is recommended to provide both lecturers' and students' training programs to promote better online learning and teaching. Moreover, frequency and duration of video conference meeting should be added and assignments given should be reduced.

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