Synchronous Online Learning in English Language Classrooms in Indonesia: A Literature Review

Akhyar Rido[1], Bagus Hary Prakoso[2], Analiza Liez Perez-Amurao[3], Heri Kuswoyo[4], Berlinda Mandasari[5]

[145]Faculty of Arts and Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia
[2]Pusat Riset Pendidikan, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional Republik Indonesia
[3]Humanities and Language Division, Mahidol University International College

akhyar_rido@teknokrat.ac.id, bagu015@brin.go.id,
analizaliezl.amu@mahidol.edu, hery@teknokrat.ac.id,
berlinda@teknokrat.ac.id

Abstract. In the past decades, online learning has grabbed much attention of educators globally, especially after the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic. However, students and teachers perceive the implementation of online learning differently. This study is aimed at identifying technological applications used as well as advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online learning in English language classrooms in Indonesian schools and universities during covid-19 pandemic in the existing literatures from perspectives of teachers and students. By implementing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach from Google Scholar and Scopus databases, 29 research papers published between 2020-2022 in the Indonesian context are selected and analyzed. This study results a table of technological applications, advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online learning during covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia from teachers' and students' perspectives. The results of this study can be used by relevant stakeholders to help prepare for future learning in their respective institutions and anticipate the challenge of tomorrow.

Keywords: synchronous online learning, English language classroom, technological applications, advantages and disadvantages

1   Introduction

The era of Covid-19 pandemic and disruption has made thousands of educational institutions closed most of their classes and millions of educators transformed face-to-face into online mode of learning. Following this, early 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia required all levels of education from elementary school to university shifted in-person to online learning mode as the main learning process in all subjects [1, 2, 3]. Online learning is no longer an option, but a compulsory

during this pandemic. This learning mode is also applied in all education sectors in Indonesia [4], including in English language classrooms [5, 6].

Online learning is a learning model that enables students and teachers to carry out teaching learning process remotely supported by digital platforms [7, 8, 9, 10]. Online learning has its own characteristics, including student-centered; built in a structured and organized manner; involving massive participants and participation; integrated, timely and authentic. Because of these characteristics, online learning is carried out in two platforms, synchronous and asynchronous [11, 12]. Synchronous online learning is a type of real-time learning; interaction between teacher and student as well as between student and student are carried out simultaneously like regular face-to-face meetings, facilitated by a system, usually video-conferencing or video calls. Meanwhile, asynchronous online learning is not time bound and students can carry out electronic activities in their own way, independently according to their own time availability. Normally, students only interact with learning resource or material such as reading materials, learning videos that are related to the topic of discussion while teachers only supervise or check. Teachers provide all learning materials via learning management system (LMS), web, or blog [13, 14].

Online learning models carry their significant contributions, mainly in increased accessibility and adaptability and in students' autonomy and independence [15]. It can be seen from the rapid use of e-learning platforms such as *Google Classroom* and *Zoom meeting* in their learning [16, 17]. Online learning has the ability to improve teaching and learning by revamping traditional classroom instructional methodologies and improving the quality of learning experiences [18]. However, teachers and students perceive online learning differently, especially in English language classrooms [19, 20]. Internet connection, online system platforms and students' and teachers' readiness become the major factor toward the successful implementation of online English language learning [21]. Studies revealed that the majority of teachers and students use synchronous online learning applications for English language learning during Covid-19 pandemic, but there were several challenges faced by both teachers and students such one-way communication, passive participation, and technical difficulties [5, 6]. Therefore, this study tries to identify technological applications used as well as advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online English language learning in the Indonesian context by examining the existing literatures. Thus, this study will answer the following research questions:

1. What kind of technological applications are used in synchronous online learning in English language classrooms in Indonesia?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online learning in English language classrooms in Indonesia?

2   Method

This study used Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach which provides insights into the research problem and allows a study to collect information about technological

application used as well as advantage and disadvantages of synchronous and asynchronous online English learning from a variety of sources [22]. First, the search process is done manually by going through specific journal papers in Google Scholar and Scopus databases and inserting keywords 'synchronous online learning', 'English language classroom', 'technological applications', 'advantages and disadvantages. At this stage, 168 papers are found. Second, the process is continued by limiting the time; only research papers published between 2020-2022 in the Indonesian context are included. Then, 58 papers are selected. Finally, 29 papers are chosen due to excluding papers which do not directly discuss synchronous and asynchronous interactions in English language classrooms in Indonesia.

3   Findings

The findings reveal that both teachers and students use a number of synchronous online English learning applications. They also mention some advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online English language learning, especially during Covid-19 pandemic. The following is the descriptive table of the review results.

Table 1. Technological Applications, Advantages, and Disadvantages of Synchronous English Online Learning

Applications	Advantages	Disadvantages
▪ *Zoom* ▪ *Google Meet* ▪ *Skype* ▪ *Cisco WebEx* ▪ *Discord* ▪ *Microsoft Team*	▪ Teachers and students interact in a real-time basis, like in a-face-to-face meeting ▪ Teachers easily share and display materials on screen and correct linguistic errors of students ▪ Students speak their mind verbally, get complete explanation and immediate feedback from their teachers while asking questions, and receive direct comments from their friends ▪ Students improve their speaking and listening skills	▪ Teachers and students experience poor internet connectivity, spend big internet data, use low quality gadget ▪ Teachers spend more time and energy to prepare for lesson ▪ Teachers lack of technology literacy ▪ Students lack of learning climate, experience high level of anxiety, and are afraid to speak

The above table shows technological applications, advantages, and disadvantages of synchronous online learning in English language classrooms in Indonesia. In general, both teachers and students mention some technological applications like Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, Cisco WebEx, Discord, and Microsoft Team used in their English language classrooms, especially during Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. These applications are used for lectures, discussions, and presentations. Through these applications, teachers control the whole teaching and learning, including managing turn taking and deciding who speaks and when to stop. They also give the opportunities for

students to use their English for different purposes like asking question, giving comments, and sharing ideas [5, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29].

The findings also reveal advantages and disadvantages of synchronous online English language learning. Teachers admit that the applications are easy to use and promote interaction between teachers and students as well as students and their friends in a real-time basis. They also describe that these technologies help display materials on screen which aid understanding, and in the same time, enable them to correct students' language errors mainly pronunciation and grammar [29]. Meanwhile, students also agree that the use of video-conferencing application for English language learning make them feel like in a conventional classroom as they get the opportunity to speak their mind verbally, listen to comprehensive explanations about the materials at hand from their teachers, ask questions, and receive feedback and comments from both their teachers and classmates [5, 23, 25, 27] which improve their listening and speaking skills [24, 26, 28 29].

On the other hand, teachers and students indicate some disadvantages while attending synchronous online learning in English language classrooms. Teachers mostly complain about internet connectivity and expensive internet data as the most challenging things for synchronous online learning which make learning slower and disturbed. Besides that, they need longer times to prepare properly for class while many teachers also lack of technology literacy [30]. In the same vein, students mentioned monetary issue and internet access as the main disadvantages of synchronous online learning. They also have limited technical support at home. In addition, they lack of learning climate because while attending online class, they are also doing domestic works [5, 6]. Studies also report that many students experience high level of stress so that they are reluctant to participate during synchronous online English language learning [24, 30, 31, 32, 33].

4   Conclusion

To conclude, teachers and students in Indonesia use technological applications such as Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, Cisco WebEx, Discord, and Microsoft Team in their English language classrooms, especially during Covid-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022. The advantages of using these applications include facilitating a-two-way interaction between teachers and students as well as students and students which make learning more interactive, having a feature for displaying materials on screen which aids comprehension, and getting the opportunity to share ideas and express feelings verbally which promote listening as well as speaking skills of students. Meanwhile, the disadvantages of using these applications are experiencing poor internet access and expensive internet data as well as low digital literacy which make learning slower and problematic, spending more time and energy to prepare for lesson which are tiring, lacking of learning environment which makes learning unconducive, and experiencing high anxiety which results reluctance in participation.

This study has some suggestions. First, to fully utilize the potential of technology applications and the internet, innovative language curricula for online foreign language learning are required. Second, regular training for synchronous online foreign language

learning for teachers and students are needed. Third, reading and writing skills should be incorporated with speaking and listening skills in synchronous online foreign language learning.

This study has some limitations. As this present study only reviews 29 research papers from Google Scholar and Scopus databases, therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Future study may include more papers from various research databases to provide a wider perspective of synchronous online English language classrooms in the Indonesian and global contexts.

Acknowledgments

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