

An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Using Online Media during Online Learning Process of English Language Education Study Program

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Abstract. Today, education has changed into a technological system. The face-to-face classes have to be changed to online classes because of the pandemic. It forces the students to increase their ability to use technology to support their online courses. Moreover, the students must have an internet connection to make the online class running well. Furthermore, online learning is necessary for the teacher or learners to make the course running as long as they feel comfortable and enjoys the session through video conference or share the file and assignment. This study was conducted to analyse the difficulties faced by the students in using online media during online learning process. The method used in this research is a quantitative approach. Moreover, the data was obtained through questionnaire and interview. The sample of this study was 24 seventh semester English Language Education Study Program students of STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin. The results of this study indicated that there were three main difficulties faced by the students during online learning process. The difficulties were experiencing technical glitch such as unstable internet connection and the use of internet quota; difficulty in understanding the materials; and difficulty in interacting and communicating with the lecturers and classmates.

Keywords: students' difficulties, online media, online learning

1 Introduction

An online educational system can help students communicate and share knowledge with their teachers from a distance without face to face. Educational mobile tools have emerged and show great potential to help students construct and share information and knowledge for learning through computers or mobile devices (Pence, 2007). In practice, online learning requires the support of mobile devices such as smartphone, tables and laptop which can used to access information anywhere and anytime. Various media can also be used to support the implementations of online learning, for example: WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, and other Learning Management Systems.

This condition requires the students to increase their ability to use technology to support their online courses. Moreover, the students must have an internet connection to make the online class running well. Online learning is necessary for the teacher or learners to make the course running as long as they feel comfortable and enjoys the session through video conference or share the file and assignment.

However, this situation forces the students to have extra fees to buy internet quota that will support the internet access. Therefore, they can use the internet to follow the online class wherever they are as long as they have an internet connection, whether on campus or online. Moreover, there are still some of the students face difficulties when they study online, such as extra cost for internet quota, unstable connection, misunderstanding due to limited interaction and some uncomfortable feeling.

The use of online media to support the implementation of online learning has been investigated by many researchers. Sari et al. (2020) in their study concluded that in general, the use of varied media or applications during learning process was considered useful by the students since each online media or application had their own advantages and disadvantages. Moreover, many students preferred the combination of WhatsApp, Google Meet and Zoom Application during online learning process.

Another study about the use of online media during online learning process was conducted by Ratnawati & Nurhasanah (2021). Their study highlighted that the students preferred using Google Classroom because the application was easy to use. The students also considered Zoom Cloud Meeting as the most effective and familiar to students since it was equipped with a share screen for sharing both visual and audio-visual media. Moreover, Bahtiar (2021) in his study claimed that the collaboration of these two applications was very relevant to be applied in blended learning. Google Classroom served as a teaching material provider and assignment collection channel, while Zoom was used for discussion and communication

In addition, a study conducted by Djamdjuri and Kamilah (2020) showed that WhatsApp media was very easy to use in online learning during the Covid-19. There was 75 % of the respondents use WhatsApp as learning media and only 25 % use LMS. Moreover, Munir et al (2021) conducted a study about the advantages and disadvantages of using WhatsApp as a Learning Tool during Covid-19 Pandemic. Their study highlighted some disadvantages of using WhatsApp as a learning tool. The results of their study concluded that old chats were easily piled up by the new chats. Moreover, the limitation for uploading files also needs to be considered.

During the pandemic, STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin employed online learning to prevent the spread of the virus. Therefore, various means of communications and applications were used to support the online classes, such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Quiz, and other Learning Management Systems. Although, these online media have been proven efficient to use during online learning, there are many aspects that should be considered in using them. The advantages and disadvantages of using particular online media during online learning process need to be considered in order to increase the effectiveness of online learning.

Furthermore, during the implementation of online classes, English Language Education Study Program students at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin face many difficulties when using online media during online learning process. According to some students in preliminary research, they faced some difficulties in using online media such as WhatsApp since WhatsApp application cannot send large files and their chatting rooms become messy because of too many WhatsApp learning groups. They also stated that they found it difficult to use some online media because they were not familiar with them. In addition, there are many other difficulties faced by the students that need to be analysed. This study intends to analyse students' difficulties in using online media during online learning process in English Language Education Study Program.

2 Review of Literature

2.1 The Nature of Difficulty

Difficulty is a condition that shows the characteristics of obstacles in activities to achieve goals so that better efforts are needed to overcome these disorders. According to Huang (2002), "the increased difficulty in detecting and responding to students feeling is some reason why a deeper understanding is need as new technologies and increasing class sizes impact education." The online learning environment, especially distance learning environments, is often explicitly designed so the students will have flexibility and autonomy in their class. Students, when they are studying online or distance, it makes the ability to access material all have and find their own sources and their own time or place constrained by centralized timetables

However, Bjork (2011) has suggested that difficulties resulting in confusion can benefit students learning activities. In addition, D'Mello et al. (2014) found that inducing difficulties and confusion in an intelligent tutoring system appeared to enhance learning. Moreover, some research has indicated that difficulties are maybe particularly beneficial for conceptual learning, where students sometimes need to overcome misconceptions before developing a more sophisticated understanding of the topic area.

Based on the definitions above, the researchers conclude that difficulties are the challenges that make learners need to work hard to solve the difficult situation of what they learn. Furthermore, difficulty in this study refers to the difficulty faced by the students in using online media during online teaching and learning process.

2.2 *Problem Solving*

Problem-solving is an exertion to figure out the difficulty that learners or teachers face in any condition to be better than before. For example, the students face difficulty in the English lesson because they need to be able to speak fluently. In this case, the teacher must find out the best way to solve the students' the difficulty of how to make them speak fluently.

As stated by Mayer (1998), the desire is affected by motivation and emotion such as interest, conviction, and the conception of own abilities in the motivational of the students can appear interested, habits, ideals, and others depending on the nature problem. There are some ways to make students more interested and motivate to solve their problems in educational field. First case is to create the situation that excites the pupil, energizes him/her. Stimulate the students' experiences the impulse or force them to find out the solution. The teacher has to lead the students to be more experienced and active. Moreover, Mayer (1990) defined problem solving as a summary of the cognitive processes focused on the change of the given state to the final state where the solution procedure is not obvious.

There are some typical phases used for the problem solving that are being discussed by Linhart (1976:78) the first phase is the discovery of the problematic situation. The second phase is the phase of the problem-solving process. During this phase, the students seek the solution and find some resources to change the situation (object) with respect to the required aim. The last phase is the phase of verification of the discovered property or method and its use in other problems of the same order.

Therefore, based on the theories above, the researchers concluded that problem-solving is an effort to create the condition to be fine. In this research, problem solving refers to the efforts done by the students in overcame the difficulties they face in using online media during online teaching and learning process.

2.3 *Online Learning*

Online learning is a growing educational alternative way for students who learn at university or in senior high school due to time and space constraints cannot attend a face-to-face class (Alario-Hoyos et al., 2015). Moreover, Means et al. (2009) define online learning as the "learning from distance that can connect each other over the internet connection Internet." This definition excludes purely print-based correspondence education, broadcast television or radio, video conferencing, video cassettes, and stand-alone educational software programs which do not have a significant Internet-based instructional component.

Furthermore, Richardson (2000) argued that "the unique characteristics that define online learning (an appropriate combination of asynchronous and synchronous voice, text and video) can actually lead to enhanced or hyper-communication". In addition, Koohang and Harman (2005) stated that "online learning is the process of delivery of education all activities that relevant to instructing, teaching, and learning process through various platforms."

Based on the theory above, the researchers may conclude that learning online is an internet connection which needs some application to support the teaching and learning process without face-to-face class.

Furthermore, there are some types of online learning. Algahatani (2011) divided e-learning into two basic types consisting of computer-based and the internet-based e-learning. Computer-based learning comprises the use of a full range of hardware and software generally that are available for the use of information and communication technology and also each component can be used in either of two ways: computer-managed instruction and computer-assisted-learning. In computer assisted-learning, computers are used instead of the traditional methods by providing interactive software as a support tool within the class or as a tool for self-learning outside the class. In the computer-manage destruction, however, computers are employed for the purpose of storing and retrieving information to aid in the management of education.

Moreover, Algahatani (2011) described the completely online mode as "synchronous" or "asynchronous" by the application of applying optional timing of interaction. The synchronous mode allows learners to discuss with the instructors and also among themselves via the internet at the same time with the use of tools such as the videoconference and chat rooms.

This type, according to Almosa and Almubarak (2005), offers the advantage of instantaneous feedback. According to Epignosis, (2014), There are two types of online learning as follows:

1) Synchronous Learning

Synchronous e-learning is online instant messaging and videoconferencing. Students and teachers can discuss any lesson and asking answer questions directly through an online platform.

2) Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, can be used when the students and teacher are offline. Communication or homework can be delivered through e-mail or instant messaging posts on a group or forums. Ideally, practical e-learning courses should include both asynchronous and synchronous learning activities.

2.4 Media

Media is an essential tool for an educational system to support the teachers and learners in doing the teaching and learning process. Especially when they learn online, it can help their online class process because they can learn anywhere without face to face. According to Smaldino et al. (2011), media, the plural form of a mediator (medium), is a means of communication. Derived from the Latin *medium* ("between"), this term refers to anything that carries information between a source and a receiver. Six basic categories of media are text, audio, visual, video, engineer (manipulative) (objects), and people.

The media aims to facilitate the teacher and learners to communicate and learn through an online class. Media format is the physical form in which the message is included and displayed. Each media has its advantages and limitations that vary in the types of words that can be recorded and posted. Selecting a media format can be a complicated task. The factors to consider are a large number of media and technology available, the diversity of learners, and the number is to be achieved. There are many kinds of media that can be used by the teacher in the teaching-learning process, especially when they have a class through an online class. According to Haryanto (2011), there are several types of educational media commonly used in the teaching process:

- 1) The free media such as images, photographs, graphics, charts, or diagrams, posters, cartoons, comics, and others. Graphic media is often called two- dimensional media; the media has a length and width.
- 2) The media in the form of three-dimensional models such as solid models (solid model), the model cross-section, stacking models, working models, mock-ups, dioramas, and others.
- 3) Media as a slide projection, filmstrip, movies, use of OHP, and others
- 4) The use of the environment as a medium of education. The free media is part of WhatsApp because, through WhatsApp, we can share images, photographs, and others.

Based on the theory above, the researchers concluded that media is one of the important tools to support the teaching and learning process, especially when the online learning process at this pandemic situation.

2.5 Online Learning Media

In this study, online learning media refers to the media or application used the lectures during online teaching and learning process. Here are some online media or applications that frequently used by the lecturers of English Language Education Study Program lecturers of STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin.

2.5.1 WhatsApp Media

WhatsApp is one of the media platforms that need an internet connection to connect with people around the world. WhatsApp can support the teacher and learner in doing online classroom if they cannot attend face to face; they can follow the class through WhatsApp group as media online learning.

WhatsApp is founded by Brian Acton, and Jan Koum in 2009. WhatsApp needs the internet as the connection to send the SMS text messaging system. It provides voice calling from one WhatsApp user to another, it also provides voice calling from one WhatsApp user to the other, voice recording as well, which lets users send audio messages instead as well as voice recording, which lets users record and send audio messages instead of typing.

According to Barhoumi (2015), WhatsApp comes from the English phrase “Whats' up?”, meaning “what's new?”. It is an instant messaging application for smartphone. It allows users to exchange images, videos, and audio or written messages by using the internet. Plana et al. (2013) examines the use of WhatsApp in English language studies among students in Spain, and their findings showed that students reported a rise in motivation and a greater enthusiasm for reading in a foreign language. WhatsApp has become a shared platform that enhances accessibility, encourages cooperation, and intensifies motivation to take an active part in academic assignments (Rambe and Bere, 2013).

According to Akpan & Ezinne (2017), WhatsApp has been regarded as one of the most effective of collaborative tools for teaching and learning process, and it can help students to construct their own knowledge, enhance their communication, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. They do not have to meet the teacher face to face in the classroom because they can ask a question from their home as long as they have an internet connection.

Although the use of WhatsApp has proved to be effective in enhancing students learning, it also has its weakness. For instance, when the student has to learn everywhere and anywhere, they felt uncomfortable because the situation of the online learning process does not support them to learn well. WhatsApp is a kind of media that can connect people around the world by messaging, videoconference, sending files or documents, and WhatsApp media can create a group member to make the discussion become a good system of communication.

2.5.2 Google Classroom

Google Classroom is one of the educational features provided by Google Apps for Education (GAPE) released to the public on August 12, 2014. Google Classroom is an application that enables the creation of classrooms in cyberspace (Putri P. & Romyeni, 2017). Google Classroom can be a means of distributing tasks, submitting tasks and even assessing the tasks that students collected. Besides, the Google Classroom app is very useful for online learning, available for free and can be used for any device.

Moreover, Google Classroom is a tool which facilitates students and teacher collaboration; teacher can also create and distribute assignments for students in an online classroom for free. Google classroom has some benefits such as paperless, can be accessed anywhere and everywhere as long as there is internet connection and from any devices, to communicate between teachers/lecturers and students, to give feedback to students, and personalized learning.

There are some advantages of using Google Classroom Application. Those are:

1. Google Classroom can be obtained free of charge by first signing up for a Google Apps for Education account, so it was easily to use in any devices.
2. The Google Classroom app is very useful for online learning, available for free and can be used for any device.
3. One of the sophistications of this application is that it can be used collaboratively in groups collaboratively
4. Both the students and the teacher have editing permissions giving the teacher the ability to provide feedback through the entirety of the assignment.

2.5.3 Zoom Cloud Meeting

Zoom is an application made by billionaire Eric Yuan, which was established in April 2011. Besides the application, Zoom can also be accessed via the website, both for Mac OS, Windows, Linux, iOS, and Android. Zoom is a cloud base service which offers Meetings and Webinars and provides content sharing and video conferencing capability.

Moreover, here are some advantages of using Zoom as online learning media (Ratnawati & Nurhasanah, 2021, Bahtiar, 2021):

1. Zoom application is easy to use.
2. Zoom Cloud Meeting is a learning application to students since it is equipped with a share screen for sharing both visual and audio-visual media
3. Zoom application facilitates the user for discussion and communication.
4. The features in Zoom application enables the users to record and save videos while learning process take place.

3 Discussion

The existence of the Covid-19 pandemic seems to have forced the world of education to shift from a traditional learning system to a more modern learning system, online learning. Online learning was also carried out at the STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin by using various types of applications and Learning Management Systems such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and other Learning Management Systems. However, during the implementation of online classes, students faced many difficulties when using those online media and applications.

Based on the results of questionnaires, it was found that the lectures mostly used WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet as media in online classes. Moreover, some lectures also used Kahoot! Quiz and Learning Management System. In addition, according to the students, most lecturers used more than one online media or application in learning process.

Moreover, from all the online media or applications used in learning process, Zoom and WhatsApp were considered the most difficult to use by the students. The students stated that they preferred to use other online media or applications than Zoom because Zoom used up a large amount of internet quota. Meanwhile, in using WhatsApp, the students claimed to experience learning difficulties since the lecturers could not explain the topic/lecture material to them directly through WhatsApp. Furthermore, interview was conducted to obtain more information about the students' difficulties during online learning through Zoom and WhatsApp.

In the interview, most of the students stated that in using Zoom application for online classes they needed to have a large amount of internet quota if they had to attend online classes through Zoom application. Zoom application consumed more data usage since it displayed video conference and shared screen. As stated by Mu'awanah et al. (2021) in their study, in order to use Zoom application for online classes, the students spent extra cost for internet bill or internet quota.

In addition, the use of Zoom application needed stable internet connection. It was challenging for the students who had poor internet connection unsupported gadgets to use Zoom application for online classes (Mu'awanah et al., 2021). Slow and unstable internet connection was still the biggest challenge for students who lived in rural areas. Since the use of Zoom application required a stable internet connection, sometimes the students missed the explanation because the display and sound delayed.

From the interview, it was also found that the students experienced the limitation of WhatsApp video call features. Since WhatsApp only offered a maximum video call limit of 8 people, it was difficult when the lecturers wanted to have a discussion between students and lecturers. Djamdjuri & Kamilah (2020) claimed that video conference feature in WhatsApp was very limited. Thus, the communication between lecturers and students could not happen directly. This problem, however, could be solved by combining the use of WhatsApp with other media online or application such as Zoom and Google Meet.

Moreover, some students stated that they found it hard to organize the materials and learning files they downloaded from WhatsApp learning groups. This condition made their files unorganized and hard to find when needed. One of the solutions offered by the students was using "Starred message" feature to mark important file. Thus, it was easier to find certain file from the stacked messages. This result was in line with the result of the study conducted by Munir et al. (2021). Their study highlighted that one of the disadvantages of using WhatsApp as a learning tool was old chats were easily piled up by the new chats.

The last difficulty was chatting list is messy and piled up in WhatsApp learning groups. Most of the students stated that their chatting rooms became messy because of too many WhatsApp learning groups. They also found it hard to find certain chats they needed from the chatting room. For example, during the discussion, some of the students stated that in order to participate in the discussions and

answers the questions by the lecturers, they had to scroll back to find the questions given. As stated by Gusuringa (2018), the students at times felt annoyed when they wanted to find old chats.

Therefore, even though the use of WhatsApp as media of teaching and learning process was considered easy and practical (Barhoumi, 2015; Akpan & Ezinne, 2017), the students still found the use of this application was not sufficient. The students found it hard to communicate and interact directly with the lecturers through WhatsApp application. Thus, the use of WhatsApp as media of teaching and learning process needed to be reconsidered and supported by the use of other applications and Learning Management Systems.

Furthermore, the students also mentioned some difficulties they experienced during online learning process. There were: 1) experiencing technical glitch such as unstable internet connection and the use of internet quota; 2) difficulty in understanding the materials; and 3) difficulty in interacting and communicating with the lecturers and classmates. More than half of the students or 19 students stated that they experienced difficulties in using online media during online learning process due to unstable internet connection. They also revealed that the online applications such as Zoom and Google Meet used up a large amount of internet quota. It meant they had to prepare additional fund to buy internet quota.

In addition, ten students stated that they experienced difficulties in understanding the material during online classes. This situation occurred especially when the lecturers only shared the material through WhatsApp group chat or Google Classroom without giving explanation. The students also preferred online classes that combined synchronous and asynchronous learning methods. As stated by Sari et al. (2020), the use of varied media or applications during learning process was considered useful by the students since each online media or application had their own advantages and disadvantages.

Moreover, nine students claimed that they faced difficulties in interacting and communicating with the lecturers and classmates. The students revealed that when online media such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp were used in conducting online class, they found it hard to interact and communicate with the lectures and classmates. In addition, they stated that by using Zoom application they could interact directly with the lecturers. This result was in line with the study conducted by Ratnawati & Nurhasanah (2021). Their study highlighted that Zoom Cloud Meeting was considered as the most effective and familiar to students since it gave more opportunities for the lecturers and the students to interact.

Therefore, it could be concluded that in choosing the online media used in conducting online classes, the lecturers needed to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each media or application. Thus, the use of varied

4 Conclusion

There are three main difficulties faced by the students during online learning process. The difficulties are: 1) experiencing technical glitch such as unstable internet connection and the use of internet quota; 2) difficulty in understanding the materials; and 3) difficulty in interacting and communicating with the lecturers and classmates. In addition, the use of varied media or applications during learning process is preferred by the students.

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6 References

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