

Optimizing The Use Of Information Technology Based Media To Teach English During Pandemic Covid-19

Desna Fauziah
Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Abstract: Since the global spread of COVID-19, online learning has been used widely in almost all educational institution. Following the call of national government to establish a distance learning system using online learning, all elements of education need to adapt to continue the teaching and learning process. Thus, optimizing information technology to help teacher strengthening the lesson is a need. Although the use of information technology to develop media in teaching and learning process has been done, the practice is not without problems. Thus, this study aims at investigating how teacher optimize the use of information technology-based media to teach English during pandemic covid-19. The participant of this study was 2 teachers in in a private junior high school. Data was gathered through interview and documentation. The findings showed that some strategies were applied to optimize the use of information technology -based media to teach the students.

Keywords: *Challenges, Online Teaching, Learning Media*

Introduction

Global spread of COVID-19 has an impact on how people behave in their daily lives. They have to implement health protocols in carrying out their activities. This pandemic also has an impact on education. Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim encourages all parties to ensure that learning continues face-to-face by implementing strict health protocols or learning is carried out by a remote system. Distance learning has actually been popular in recent years, but has grown in popularity since the Covid-19 pandemic. This is in accordance with what Atkins (2007) and Nguyen (2015) stated that online learning is a practical and popular learning to increase the effectiveness of learning.

Due to various limitations, there are schools that still apply offline or face-to-face learning by dividing the number of students into half the normal number. Some students come in the morning and some in the afternoon. There are also schools that implement an offline learning system. The students study independently at home. Students come to school only to pick up and submit assignments. This happens because of internet network constraints. As stated by Kusumo, et al (2012), technology-based learning cannot be applied in certain schools due to network limitations and infrastructure limitations. However, there are schools that are trying to implement online learning. Online learning can be partial or complete (Bakia et al., 2012; Means et al., 2009) for schools that have sufficient internet access, both teacher and student internet access, then these schools prefer to use an online learning system, namely taking advantage of the role technology to assist the learning process of distance teaching. This technology itself is used as a tool to support better education (Collins: 1992).

¹ Email: fauziahdesna@gmail.com

According to O'Shea and Self (1983), technology is a medium for change. Many technological innovations have been carried out that aim to facilitate various facilities in all areas of life. Many developments in human life are influenced by technology. One of the existing developments is in the field of education. However, not all parties have fully used technology to advance education. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the role of technology is very much needed for sustainability in the field of education and people are competing to learn various platforms that can facilitate the learning process. Technology helps teachers to be able to connect with students and helps students to be actively involved in the learning process. Student involvement can be demonstrated through animation, simulations, videos, documents, and other interactive content (Huang et al., 2020; Powell et al., 2015).

However, the practice of applying the technology into the learning should be done carefully and it needs a serious attention from the teachers. As mentioned by Murphy, Shelley, & Baumann (2010) that distance teaching takes more expertise in some areas; one of them is interpersonal skills. In fact, teaching in virtual instruction is not merely switching the learning from traditional to online platforms. This is apparently a way more than that. Compton (2009) says that teaching online language courses takes the skills in pedagogy, evaluation, as well as particular role and responsibilities. Since online teaching is different from offline teaching, especially in language class, there are challenges faced by the teachers in making the lesson effective and in making the students take an active participation during the lesson.

There are still weaknesses occur during the practice of online learning. As mentioned by Dhawan (2020) that in the time of crisis like during this COVID-19 pandemic, delivering knowledge turns out to be a challenging thing to do.

Literature Review

Lai, Zhao, & Li (2008) in Compton (2009) mentions that one of the principles in designing distance language learning is giving clear instructions is. In giving assignment, there should be understandable instructions on what and how students submit the tasks (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). In other words, that no matter how good a digital learning platform is, the successful of digital learning platform depends on the clear and adequate instruction given.

Then, successful learning, especially for online learning depends on how teachers connects with the students. Zhang, Wang, & Li (2020) says that teachers are agents of communication who has a responsibility for a continuous connection in an online learning environment. Thus, the success of communication heavily relies on how teachers select digital platforms and type of learning activities that can best facilitate communication between them and their students. Teacher and students should have a good communication so that learning can be done smoothly.

Not all teachers are familiar with various online learning platforms. The widespread COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way teachers prepare the learning media. Want or do not want, they have to adapt with the condition, They have to improve their ability to create a more various earning media. As mentioned by Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020 that a wide range of applications and learning management systems are used during distance learning. Zhu & Liu, (2020) also mentions that institutions start to introduce and provide online learning platforms to support online learning activity.

Research Methods

The participant of this study was 2 teachers in in a private junior high school. Data was gathered through interviews and documentation. This study is qualitative so the research instrument was the researcher herself as a human instrument who collected qualitative data. Data of this study were collected based on some questions about teachers' efforts to maximize

the learning during pandemic covid-19. Collection of data were done by implementing strict health protocol. The answers of the questions were well noted.

Findings & Discussion

Based on the results of interviews and observations, and document documentation, the following data were obtained:

1. The teacher prepares a class in google classroom where the class is managed by several teachers consisting of classroom teachers and subject teachers.



fig 1. class view

Learning using google classroom is used as it does in face-to-face classes. Students enter class according to schedule. When the schedule is for TIK, students will go to TIK class, when there is English lesson, students will go to the English class. In each class the teacher provides teaching materials according to a predetermined schedule. The material prepared by the teacher can be in the form of video, audio, and also documents that students must study. Students are also given exercises where these exercises are carried out according to the schedule set by the teacher. After students study the material, they work on the assignment and they must upload the assignment in the slot provided by the teacher.

However, there are of course challenges in online learning. The challenge is, students are required to be more independent, have their own awareness to learn. They must be able to learn on their own even though there is no teacher supervising them. In addition, students are also required to be honest in their work because it is possible that the assignments given by the teacher are not carried out by the students themselves. It could be that the task is done by the student's brother or parent.

2. Students fill in the attendance prepared by the teacher in google classroom. In this section, students are invited to practice honesty and independence in filling attendance by placing a check mark according to the choices given by the teacher. The form of the attendance filling page is shown in Figure 2.



fig.2 attendance / attendance page

3. The learning material is prepared in the form of learning videos. This allows students to play back the material if they feel they do not understand the material provided by the teacher. The teacher tries to make the video as attractive as possible so that students are excited to watch the learning video that the teacher has uploaded to the google class.



Fig.3 students studying in google class

4. The exercises are prepared by the teacher and students upload the exercises in the slots provided by the teacher. Then the exercises that are collected will receive feedback from the teacher.



fig.4 notification of assessment from the teacher

5. There is also a communication forum for discussions between teachers and students as well as students and students.
6. Teachers easily monitor student assignments whether they are collected on time or not because the assignment schedule is automatically recorded by Google.

In Google Class, both teachers and students can share materials, assignments, questions for quizzes, and even contact each other. Teachers can easily manage classes from their smartphone. No more paper needed for assignments, notes or quizzes. Students can work on assignments and send them to the folder provided by the teacher in the application. Teachers can make announcements and assign assignments for classes to be posted on Google Classrooms.

The types of files that can be sent in this application also vary. All file types like doc, pdf, ppt, xl, jpeg, mp3 or even mp4 are accepted. This service is especially useful for language classes that cover speaking and writing skills. Therefore, Google class is the right choice because it can accommodate teachers in providing one material and assignments, both audio and visual. It's also time efficient. Unlike ordinary classrooms, which require teachers and students to meet in the classroom at a certain time, this application can be operated anytime and anywhere. You don't need to be in a particular classroom to get lessons.

What user needs is a smartphone with an internet connection. The app has a calendar system that helps users keep class activities on track. Teachers can set a schedule for when assignments are sent and get notifications if students are on time, late, or miss assignments. Such a system is very useful for the student to see what he or she needs to do to meet the class requirements. The data shows that Google class increases the number of students who successfully complete the assignments given by the teacher.

Students become more motivated to play do the job because they just need to open their smartphone, see what they need to do, do it and then send it and it's done. Teachers no longer need to deal with paper because they can check and assess student work from smartphones too. The teacher can immediately give a score or comment on the student's work and then return it to the students to see.

According to C. Pappas (2017) there are various advantages of using the google class, namely: easy to use, effective, paperless, fast, automatic, allows discussion, and can be used by anyone. Google classes can be accessed from all devices. You don't need to be a Google expert to use this app. It's very easy to use with a simple format. Anyone who has a Google account can access this application using any gadget, such as: smartphones, computers and tablets. Users can access it anytime anywhere as long as they have an internet connection and a gadget.

Google Docs is a Google product that can be used in Google Classroom. It can be a tool to share documents and are stored online and shared with an unlimited number of people. When teachers make announcements or assignments using Google Doc, students can directly access them via Google Drive. The teacher just needs to make sure that he or she has shared it with the students.

With this google class, subject matter and assignments no longer need paper. Teachers and students also don't have to worry about losing files because everything has been saved by Google. Google classes also speed up the assignment process so that the learning process is fast and efficient. Students do not have to meet with the teacher to submit their assignments. They only need to upload it in the slot provided. Teachers can easily see who has submitted their assignment and who is still working on it, and send feedback directly to students.

Based on the data collected, there are three pages on the main Google Classroom menu, 1) Stream, which is a notification page including an announcement or chat from the teacher. Students can also replay the chat directly. Teachers and students can interact with each other through the chat facilities provided by Google Classroom. Interaction through these facilities can be done in groups or privately so that teachers can monitor the development of competencies among their students. Teachers can directly interact with individuals when they experience problems or ask something personal. Basically, chat facilities can improve students' ability to communicate and collaborate. 2) Classwork, the teacher must prepare the material and upload it into classwork so that students can access the material without any time and space restrictions. Uploaded material can be in the form of articles or text, images, audio, video, and several other teaching materials. In addition, student submission of online assignments can also be monitored in an orderly manner. Along with supporting materials, the teacher can also create Quiz Assignments, progress on the work done by students can be seen by the teacher and assessments can be displayed in this feature. 3) People, this shows who are the members of the class, the teacher knows whether they are participating or not (Harjanto & Sumarni, 2019).

Recent research has highlighted that the use of google class can make learning effective, especially in helping students understand the material so that it can improve the quality of learning (Iftakhar, 2016). Using Google Classroom is practically easy and attractive to students. However, sometimes the features available in Google Classroom make users confused (Nurhayati et al., 2019). This is because users do not know how to use the futur features in detail. This confusion is not a significant obstacle because there is a tutorial on using Google which can be seen on the YouTube page or on the tutorial web page. Finally, this study confirms that the use of Google Classroom during this pandemic is very effective and useful for improving students' abilities and skills, discipline as an alternative way of learning distance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion and Summary

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the Google Classroom application provides many benefits for teachers and students who use it. Google Class provides tools that help teachers manage their classes efficiently and effectively. Google Class is easy to use, free, paperless, and flexible. Research has found that teaching language to students can be attractive because of the integration of teaching strategies and technology. Students enjoy classes that directly improve their language skills. In addition, Google Class facilitates students to study effectively because they can access teaching materials from anywhere using their cellphones.

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About the Author:

Chief Researcher
Desna Fauziah <i>Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia</i>



² Email: fauziahdesna@gmail.com