

Constraints of Reading for Professional Context Courses Online Class During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit the world in early 2020 has caused impacts on various aspects of life, including the education system. Concerning this pandemic, the Indonesian government has issued policies to regulate the learning system so that it can continue running well. One of them is the existence of a distance learning policy or online learning for all levels of education. Learning activities are carried out from home online. Online learning is considered one of the best solutions during a pandemic. However, in practice, there were constraints faced by both students and teachers. The constraints that arose in online lectures, especially in the Reading for Professional Context course were time, internet network, internet cost, and technological facilities. These obstacles have bad impacts on the discussion process and the comprehension process of the material. These constraints and impacts are expected to be the initial part to develop strategies that can support online learning effectively.

Keywords: Constraints, Reading for Professional Context, Covid-19 Pandemic

Abstrak

Pandemi Covid-19 yang menyerang dunia pada awal tahun 2020 membawa dampak pada berbagai segi kehidupan termasuk pada bidang Pendidikan. Terkait dengan adanya pandemi ini, pemerintah Indonesia mengeluarkan kebijakan-kebijakan untuk mengatur sistem pembelajaran agar tetap dapat berjalan dengan baik. Salah satunya adalah dengan adanya kebijakan pembelajaran jarak jauh atau daring bagi seluruh tingkatan pendidikan. Kegiatan pembelajaran dilakukan dari rumah secara daring. Pembelajaran secara daring dinilai sebagai salah satu solusi terbaik pada masa pandemi. Namun, pada praktiknya, terdapat kendala-kendala yang dihadapi baik oleh siswa maupun pengajar. Kendala-kendala yang muncul pada perkuliahan daring khususnya pada matakuliah Reading for Professional Context adalah kendala waktu, kendala jaringan internet, kendala pembiayaan kuota internet, dan kendala fasilitas teknologi. Kendala-kendala tersebut membawa dampak yang cukup buruk terhadap proses diskusi dan proses pemahaman materi perkuliahan. Kendala-kendala dan dampak-dampak ini diharapkan dapat menjadi bagian awal untuk menyusun strategi yang dapat menunjang pembelajaran daring secara efektif.

Kata kunci: Kendala, Reading for Professional Context, Pandemi Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, the public was surprised by the entry of the SARS-CoV-2 virus as the cause of Covid-19 in Indonesia for the first time. According to Kompas.Com, on March 2, 2020, the Indonesian government for the first time officially announced 2 cases of patients infected with Covid-19. Covid-19 or what is commonly referred to as the Coronavirus by the community first appeared in Wuhan, China at the end of December 2019. Covid-19 spread throughout the world, including Indonesia. The spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is quite fast. According to the news site Tirto.id, at the end of March 2020, the total

number of patients infected with Covid-19 reached 1,414 with a death ratio of 8.63%. This virus spreads through droplets or splashes of the patient's saliva to other humans, either directly or through objects that are splashed by the patient's saliva.

The government's initial step in responding to the entry of Covid-19 is to recommend wearing masks for people who experience cough complaints accompanied by respiratory problems. In the middle of March 2020, the government officially implemented policies in the context of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the obligation to wear a mask when leaving the house, wash

hands, stay at home, social distancing, physical distancing, large-scale social restrictions (PSBB), the system of working from home or known as Work from Home (WFH), and distance learning (PJJ).

The Government's policy in imposing a distance learning system for all levels of education is one of the Government's efforts to overcome the spread of Covid-19. The policy is stated in the Ministerial Policy Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Educational Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). All educational activities such as learning activities, teaching, taking grades, and exams are carried out online or remotely. Online learning is the best solution during this pandemic. Learning can be done anywhere, anytime, without any physical meeting. Online learning is carried out using various technologies such as computers, smartphones, or notebooks with an internet connection. At first glance, this policy seems easy to implement. However, in practice, there are many problems faced by education implementers.

The English Education Department of Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa, as one of the higher education units in Indonesia, is also obliged to conduct online learning. UNESCO, in its handbook on handling flexible learning during the Covid-19 period, describes 6 flexible online learning strategies (UNESCO: 2020). By implementing the learning strategies recommended by UNESCO, it is hoped that the learning process can be carried out well. However, in practice, there are still obstacles faced by students. For example, in the Reading for Professional Context course, learning could not be carried out optimally. If in offline classes the lecturer could see directly the reading process carried out by students, in online classes the lecturer could not see the reading process directly. The

pre and post-reading discussion process was also considered not optimal because students did not deliver it directly and seemed passive for various reasons, such as due to poor signal factors. This kind of obstacle was often encountered in any course. In this study, the constraints faced by students, especially in the online learning process for the Reading for Professional Context Course during the Covid-19 pandemic were revealed. The results of the research are expected to be the first step to finding the right method to overcome these obstacles to create an effective learning process.

METHODOLOGY

This research used descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive research focuses on what rather than how or why something has happened. The purpose of this study is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Therefore, observation and survey tools are often used to collect data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Qualitative research develops concepts to assist researchers in understanding social phenomena that occur in natural situations (Mc. Kernan: 1996). Meaning, experience, and perception of research subjects is an emphasis on qualitative research. Dimensions of qualitative research include understanding the context, people, and all interactions that occur. In line with Nassaji (2015), he says qualitative research collects data qualitatively, holistically and often involves collecting diverse data from multiple sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants' understandings, such as opinions, perspectives, and attitudes involving inductive data exploration to identify themes, recurring patterns, or concept and then explain and interpret the data. As Cresswell (2014) says that qualitative research usually collects various forms of data, such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information rather than relying on a single data source, data

collection in this study used an online questionnaire using the Google Forms application. Then, an analysis of the results of the questionnaire was carried out. The data will be described in a qualitative descriptive manner.

The samples of this study were 22 second-semester students of English Department, Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa Yogyakarta who joined the Reading for Professional Context course in classes B1 and B2 in the even semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. Questionnaire and Interview techniques were used to obtain the data needed in this study. Then, the data will be presented descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were 14 questions about things that could affect distance learning on the questionnaire. The location of the students when doing distance learning was one of the questions in the questionnaire. The question of location was important, considering the internet network had not been spread evenly throughout Indonesia. Many remote areas had not experienced the internet network. Some students even had to go to the city to get an internet connection.

The next question was how often students experience problems. This question was needed to determine the intensity of the constraints faced. The next question was in what aspects students experience problems. Whether it was in terms of time, cost, or internet network availability. For example, bad network problems were only experienced when it was raining, during power outages, and so on. Certain areas did experience internet connection problems at certain times such as at night, when it was raining, or during a power outage so that it could interfere the learning process. This could be classified into time constraints and internet network availability

constraints. The constraint in terms of financing was the problem faced in providing internet quota for distance learning.

The other question was about the impact of online learning on the discussion process and the understanding of learning. This question was also important to find out whether distance learning had a significant influence on the discussion process and understanding of lecture material. The answer to this question would show whether online learning had a good or bad impact on the learning process.

The last question was the suggestions, input, and expectations of students towards the online learning process. Through suggestions, input, and expectations, these students were expected to be taken into consideration to make online learning better.

Based on the results of the questions above, the following data were obtained:

Online Learning Locations

The data on the questionnaire showed that the 22 student respondents above were living in various provinces in Indonesia. There were 16 students conducting online learning in the province of D.I. Yogyakarta, spread over Kulonprogo Regency, Bantul Regency, Sleman Regency, and Yogyakarta City. 2 students were in Bangka Belitung Islands, precisely located in East Belitung Regency. 1 student was in Purworejo, Central Java. 1 person was in Lampung Province, East Lampung district. Then 1 student was in North Kolaka, Southeast Sulawesi, and the last one was in Tanung Selor, North Kalimantan. The number of students location can be seen in the following diagram:

Graphic 1:
Students Locations



Constraints Faced by Students

Question number six in the questionnaire was about the constraints faced by students while having the reading class. Regarding the intensity of the constraints, the results of the questionnaire stated that of the 22 student respondents, 13.6% of students always had problems, 13.6% of students often experienced problems, 72.7% of students sometimes experienced problems, and 0% never had problems. Here is picture of the pie chart from the Google form questionnaire:

Picture 1:
Constrain Intensity



Based on the diagram, as many as 13.6%, 3 students always experienced problems in online learning. The location of the students are as follows:

Table 1.
Location which Always Experienced
Problems

No.	Name	Location			
		Province	Municipality	District	Village
1.	M. Iqbal P	DIY	Yogyakarta	Banguntapan	Banguntapan
2.	Fitri Telmawati	Kalimantan Utara	Kab. Nunukan	Krayan	Lembudud
3.	Alif Willyanto	DIY	Kab. Kulonprogo	Girimulyo	Jatimulyo

The three students who experienced problems in online learning according to the table above were not located in the same location. Two students were in the DIY Province, one was in Yogyakarta City and one was in Kulonprogo Regency. One student was from North Kalimantan Province, in Nunukan Regency. Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was proven that location did not affect the constraints faced by students. Students who lived in urban areas still experienced problems. Constraints faced by students were not only the Internet network, but also time and cost. The following was a description of the constraints in terms of time, cost, internet network, and availability of communication tools:

Time

The time used for online learning was less inefficient because it took longer. For example, if the class was started at 7:30, meeting link was shared at 7:30. It would take about 10 minutes to wait for all students to enter the online forum. Then if the internet signal was unstable, there might be a pause in the lecture process, so that it would waste time. Here is the table of the time constraint.

Table 2.
Time Constrain

	Time Constrain	No Time Constrain
Numbers of Students	13	9

Based on the table above, 13 students experienced time constraints. Several students revealed that at certain times the internet connection was unstable, for example at night, when it was raining, and during a power outage. So, even though it had been agreed upon on a certain day and time to held a class, there would be still problems if it suddenly rained or the electricity went out. Another time constraint was related to time management. For example, if a lecturer postponed the class because of problems with internet connections, it would have an impact on students as well. It could be that when the lecturer got an unstable internet signal, the students got a good signal instead.

Internet Data Cost

Most of the students complained about the high costs incurred to buy internet data packages. The parents of several students were workers who affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, so they found it difficult to spend extra funds for online learning. Moreover, online classes that used video conferencing media required more internet data when compared to written online discussions either through WhatsApp Group or Google Classroom.

Table 3.
Internet Data Cost

	Problem	Not a Problem
Numbers of Students	12	7

In this part, out of 22 respondents, only 19 respondents answered. 12 respondents stated that they had problems with internet cost. So, it could be said that most students felt that the cost of the internet was a constraint on online lectures.

Quality of Internet Network

Not all regions in Indonesia have good and stable internet network facilities. There are numbers of areas in Indonesia that have not even experienced Internet, so that it becomes problem. Even if the internet had reached some region, it did not always mean they get good quality. Here is a table of the internet quality received by the students.

Table 4.
Internet Network Quality

	Good	Bad
Numbers of Students	5	15

A total of five answers stated that the internet network was not a problem. The said that the connection was consider to be good. However, 15 students stated that there were internet problems. Internet problems generally occurred when the weather was bad, geographically remote, or due to a power outage. Some students said that they lived in a mountain area, so that geographically area interfered the connection.

Other Constrains

In addition to the three constraints mentioned above, it turned out that there were several other constraints experienced by the respondents. A small number of students complained about online learning because the online learning process required technological facilities such as computers and mobile phones. They complained because they did not have any adequate facilities to support the learning process.

Table 5.
Other Constrains

	Gadget	Electricity
Numbers of Students	2	1

According to the table above, there were other obstacles in online learning. The obstacle was that students did not have any adequate facilities and power cuts. In online learning, lecturers often provided video or audio material, or soft files such as Ms. Word, Ms. Excel, or PDF. These materials usually use a large capacity so the smartphone or computer should also have a large capacity. Lack of memory storage capacity on a smartphone or computer could cause damage to the device. In addition, there are also several areas in certain places which took turn to have power outage. That activity was also related to the availability of internet networks. If there was a power outage, the internet network would usually automatically turn off as well.

The Effect of Online Learning Constraints on the Process of Learning Activities Discussion Process

The discussion process in online learning could not run effectively and efficiently because the interaction between lecturers and students was not carried out directly. There were quite a lot of obstacles, for example, an unstable internet signal, and students who tended to be passive because they did not deal directly with lecturers. The following are the results of the questionnaire which shows us whether or not the online learning give a positive effect:

Table 5.
The Effect of Online Class to the Discussion Process

	Positive	Negative
Numbers of Students	3	18

Of the 21 responses given, 3 respondents said that the online learning gave positive effect. While the remaining 18 respondents stated negatively. They said that

the discussion process could not run well, the interaction was limited or not interactive, so the discussion process could not run optimally. Students could not freely express their opinions.

Comprehension of Material

The material given by the lecturer in online learning was considered to be quite difficult to understand, one of which was due to the unstable internet signal factor.

Table 6.
Comprehension of the Material

	Low	Medium	High
Numbers of Students	17	5	0

Of the 22 responses given, most students said that in online learning the process of understanding the material was very lacking. This was because when the lecturer explained both orally and in writing, there was be a gap between students and lecturer. In offline learning, the lecturer could explain well with the support of intonation and also gestures. While in online class, especially in written discussions, lecturers could not emphasize intonation and gestures. In video conference, several obstacles also occurred, such as buffering, or the loss of internet signal so that the voice of the lecturer who was explaining was also lost.

The limitation of the internet network might also be a reason for lecturers to provide soft file material to students. As a result, some students could not understand it themselves. In addition, misunderstandings could also occur. Most of the students also complained about the many assignments given by the lecturers as a substitute for face-to-face meetings.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research in chapter 4, it could be concluded that there are some constraints in Reading for Professional Context online class. Students came from various regions throughout Indonesia that had different internet network facilities and from families with different economic abilities. The internet signal in certain areas tended to be unstable which had a bad effect on the learning process. In general, the constraints faced were time, internet network, internet cost, and technological gadgets such as smartphones and computers.

The obstacles mentioned above had a crucial impact on the discussion process and the process of material comprehension. The limited interaction between lecturers and students had negative impacts on the discussion process and understanding of the material being discussed. If the learning process used written discussion, there was a gap in the process of delivering material by the lecturer. Lecturers could not use certain gestures and intonations to support material explanations. As a result, the discussion process did not run optimally. Furthermore, students were afraid to give comments. Comments expressed by students tended to be the same with other friends. The interaction process with video conferences was better than written discussion. In video conferencing, lecturers could use intonation and gestures when the video was on so that students could hear it directly. However, if the internet network was unstable, the discussion process and understanding of the material were not optimal.

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