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# HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ONLINE LEARNING AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Diska Fatima Virgiyanti**
Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia
diska.fatima@unida.gontor.ac.id

## ABSTRACT

One of the aspects affected by the Covid-19 pandemic is education. During the pandemic, the teachers and students in higher education should continue to carry out teaching and learning activities using an online system for all subjects. Online learning may give positive or negative impacts on students. Therefore, the author wants to examine students' perceptions in learning English using the online system. It aims to find out the effectiveness of the online learning system that is being implemented at the university. A descriptive qualitative research design was implemented in this study. The data gathered from questionnaires and interviews related to students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online English learning. The subject of the study was the third-semester students of the English Language Education Department. Based on the research results, it is suggested that online learning conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet perfect. Thus, it needs the cooperation of all elements of education to support the implementation of online learning.

**Keywords**: Covid-19 pandemic, online learning, students' perception

## INTRODUCTION

It has been more than a year since the Covid-19 outbreak has been around us. Even now, the pandemic condition in Indonesia is still worrying. It is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2); then, it becomes a highly contagious and transferable disease (Shereen et al., 2020). People who originally had lived with all the rhythms of normal life were suddenly forced to shift their activity. The global spread of the COVID-19 has changed all human activities, including the learning process (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Simamora, 2020), and it causes class suspension leading to the requirements of online learning (Moorhouse, 2020). This is why people should adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic. Not only in terms of economy, health, technology and society, but education is also an aspect that cannot be separated from system changes due to the pandemic. In the beginning, teachers and students could easily interact at school, but now the teaching and learning shifted to in front of the screen. This change, of course, makes some parties unprepared and less able to maximize it (Cheong and Nelson, 2021).

As a result, the Minister of Education and Culture decided that teaching and learning processes and activities were implemented through e-learning to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak and maintain the health of students, teachers, and educational staff (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Thus, learning activities at this time should be conducted through personal computers (PCs), laptops, or gadgets that are connected to the internet. Furthermore, teachers are able to conduct the online class by using several

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media, such as Telegram, Whatsapp, Google Meeting, Zoom, Google Classroom, and others (Khusniyah, 2019). The learning system is now shifted online. In this case, teachers and lecturers are challenged to be more creative and innovative in conducting online learning for students.

This online-based learning is carried out for all levels of education in Indonesia, from elementary school to university level and it is used for all subjects. Starting from religious lessons, language, to science. Even some lessons that should use a practical system, it is also be converted to online learning. In English Language Education Department, the lecturer also useuses online system to deliver the materials to the students. Of course, from the various materials mentioned above, each of them has its compatibility with the online system. Not all materials can be delivered using Zoom or Google Meeting, there are some materials that are more suitable for using offline class or even independent learning using the internet. Of course, the effectiveness is different based on the perception of students about learning English online.

Several research also carried out related to students' perception of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, Nugroho (2020) pointed out students' perception in conducting e-learning amid the Covid-19 outbreak. The subjects of the study were 126 students from 21 universities in Indonesia. The results revealed that e-learning help students although most of them found several challenges such as credit and signal and lack of technological knowledge. The researcher concluded that the e-learning system was less successful in replacing the learning process in the classroom. Moreover, (Agung et al., 2020) investigated the students' perception of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic at STKIP Pamane Talino with 38 English students as the respondents. This study showed that students were not ready with the new learning style. Besides, their gadget also did not support the technological changes. It is found that only 54% of students could comprehend the material easily and some of them were more satisfied with the implementation of online class. Another study was conducted by (Adnan, 2020) about the higher education perspectives on online learning in Pakistan. He added that online learning cannot create expected results in underdeveloped students because they cannot access the internet. In the contrary, (Sujarwo et al., 2020) mentioned in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, students are interested in using online learning that can be accessed flexibly, anytime, and anywhere and their perspectives on online learning have a positive impact amid the Covid-19 pandemic. It is stated that online learning is effective to assist the government in reducing the spread of Covid-19 since it prevents students go outside from home.

Some studies stated that online learning is effective for students because it makes students more independent and creative. However, some researchers also mentioned that the implementation of online learning is ineffective especially for the students in the rural areas where it is still difficult to use the technology. Therefore, researcher is interested in examining the perceptions of students, especially the English Language Education related to online English learning. It aims to find out the effectiveness of learning during the pandemic using the online system.

**METHOD**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The design is in accordance with the requirements proposed by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) which has an actual setting as a

direct data source. The researcher serves as the key instrument in this research. This research is descriptive because the data are in the form of words recorded in interview transcripts, field notes, and personal documents. The researcher used a descriptive method to collect information and provide an overview of the effectiveness of learning and teaching English online. The participants of this study were 20 students from the English Education Department at the University of Darussalam Gontor. In this study there are two instruments used, they are questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire is a data collection method that is carried out by providing a series of written questions to be answered by the respondents (Sugiyono, 2018).

The questionnaire consisted of 10 open-ended questions aimed at collecting data from each participant. The questions in the questionnaire include the perceptions of English Education students about learning English online during this pandemic. Besides, it is also described about the effectiveness of learning in 4 basic lessons they are reading, speaking, writing and listening. Furthermore, this study also reported the use of online media used in online learning, such as Zoom or Google Classroom.

Interviews were conducted to clarify the results of the findings after the study. It also aimed to complement the results of the study. There were 5 students selected to be interviewed to get more information about the perceptions of English department students about online learning.

**Table 1.** Instruments and variables

| Instruments | Variables | Date of Data Collection |
|---|---|---|
| Questionnaire | The students' perception of English online during this pandemic and the effectiveness of learning in 4 basic lessons (reading, speaking, writing, and listening) | 3 Agustus 2021 |
| Interview | Students' perception of English online during this pandemic. It was conducted to clarify the results of the findings after the study and also to complement the results of the study. | 10 Agustus 2021 |

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 2.** Percentage of Students' Questionnaire

| No | Statement | The percentage for Each Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 1. | I am very helpful with online learning | 0% | 20% | 66,67% | 13,32% |
| 2. | Online learning makes me understand the material | 0% | 6,67 % | 86,67% | 6,67% |
| 3. | Online learning improves my learning quality | 0% | 20% | 66,67% | 13,32% |
| 4. | I understand reading material better with online learning | 6,67% | 26,67% | 66,67% | 0% |
| 5. | I understand writing material better with online learning | 13,32% | 26,67% | 60% | 0% |
| 6 | I understand listening material better with online learning | 20% | 40% | 40% | 0% |

*Available at: https://uptbhs.polinema.ac.id/ivicollpolinema/proceeding_tahun/8*

| No | Statement | The percentage for Each Statement | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Strongly agree** | **Agree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
| 7. | I understand speaking material better with online learning | 0% | 6,67% | 86,67% | 6,67% |
| 8. | Online learning makes me more creative and innovative in learning | 13,32% | 26,67% | 60% | 0% |
| 9. | I prefer online learning with Zoom to Google Meet | 6,67% | 40% | 40% | 13,32% |
| 10. | I prefer online learning with personal assignments or materials to Google Classroom | 6,67% | 80% | 13,32% | 0% |

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was found that the students' perception of online English learning and teaching is students feel learning English online is very ineffective, because students feel less helpful and also difficult to understand some of the materials. It is also proved that online English learning also does not improve the quality of students' language achivement. This is evidenced by the results of the questionnaire, with a statement that online English learning is very helpful take 10 students or 66.67% disagree while three students or 20% agree and 13.32% strongly disagree about this statement. From the interviews, it was obtained that students had difficulties with learning English online. The following is the results of interviews with students.

> *Saya sendiri pribadi sulit paham apabila tidak dibimbing langsung, dan untuk pelajaran bahasa inggri ssendiri ketika online saya tambah sulit memahami materi yang diberikan.*(I personally find it is difficult to understand if I do not guided directly, and it is also difficult for me to undersand the materials in online learning). (Student 1)

The next statement is directed to the basic lessons of English. There are four main skills, reading, listening, writing, and speaking. From the four skills, only listening subjects received positive responses during online learning with 40% agreeing with the statement. According to the students, they said that in online listening materials, they can repeat the audio as they want to finish the listening assignment. It is different when they have offline learning, they have limited time to repeat the audio and to finish the assignment. While the other three materials obtained disagree responses from the students. Moreover, the highest disagree response among those four skills is speaking with 86.67%. As for speaking lessons, they feel that the material and assignments given do not improve their speaking skills during online learning. Besides, they also cannot interact directly with the lecturers to spur their enthusiasm in communicating in English. Speaking itself is very effective when it is done by individual presentations or practice speaking in public. They also conveyed this in an interview with the students.

> *"kalo pelajaran listening masih enggak apa-apa kalo hanya dengan tugas secara online, tapi kalo writing , reading, apalagi speaking susah sih kalo online. Karna kami juga pengen langsung berinteraksi dengan dosen, dan kalo ada salah langsung dibenarkan".* (For listening class, it is still okay to have online listening materials/audio, but for writing and reading it is difficult to have online learning, especially speaking class. We also want the