

Learning media and strategies used by english students in practice teaching during the pandemic

¹Syahdan Syahdan, ²Herlinawati Herlinawati, and ³Marwa Marwa

^{1, 2, 3} Universitas Lancang Kuning, Pekanbaru

(syahdan@unilak.ac.id)

Abstract. Practice teaching, indisputably, is one of the school activities distorted significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Practice teachers should adapt online learning to convey teaching and learning activities. This study aimed at finding out the internet device (wi-fi) available at schools in Pekanbaru municipality and learning media used by practicum teachers with the stable internet connectivity at schools in Pekanbaru municipality. There were 47 out of 51 English Education Students of Universitas Lancang Kuning involved in this research. They filled in 27 items of close-ended questions in the Likert scale. The findings revealed that most schools (83%) had wi-fi devices accessed by practicum teachers for teaching activities. With this device, practice teachers used more diverse applications (Google Classroom, Google Form, and Zoom video conference) more frequently (often), shown in the mean score of 4.0, to convey learning materials and tasks delivery. In schools with unstable internet connectivity, they chose the Whatsapp application to convey learning activities, including the delivery of the tasks. In conclusion, the availability of a wi-fi device with stable internet connectivity supports practice teachers in conducting online teaching activities during the pandemic. They can maximize the use of more diverse applications, namely Google Classroom, Google Form, and Zoom conference.

Keywords: Google classroom, learning media, online learning, practice teaching

INTRODUCTION

Education sector has been affected significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Referring to the UNESCO data, more than three-quarters of schools worldwide were locked to decrease the spread of this virus. The peak term occurred in the early April 2020 with 75.4% of school closures that affected more than 1.3 billion learners in 139 countries. The total duration of school closures was estimated up to 41+ weeks between the first-quarter of year 2020 to the mid of 2021 (UNESCO, 2021). Terribly, Safe to Learn (2020) claimed that the rate of school closure reached 91% worldwide up to April 2020.

To anticipate its academic impact, the authorities have taken a policy to run program of learning from home (Yulia, 2020). The program drives teachers and students to use various online learning platforms. Google Classroom, Zoom and WhatsApps are some applications to name in delivering learning materials. However, learning from home (LFH) is, still, a controversy in public discussions due to the device readiness possessed by students (Prasetyaningsih, 2020) and the technical issues of internet access (Mahyoob, 2020).

The LFH mode also affects implementation of practice teaching program by practicum teacher. Though the program requires the practicum teachers to interact with students on face to face sessions for the sake of cognitive engagements (Joo, et.al., 2014), and do observation to gain experiences (Albakri, et.al., 2017), the sudden hit of COVID-19 has shifted the way learning delivery facilitated by the teachers. In this period, they have been being challenged to implement the practicum in online learning mode. Also, they should get used to apply for diverse learning applications and need to manage some crucial issues in different aspects of teaching with ICT, including preparation of materials, content delivery, activity design, class management (Hsu & Lin, 2020), time management (Herbimo, 2020) and adequate teaching evaluation methods (Rapanta, 2020).

The readiness in ICT usage does matter for the practicum teachers in the online learning activities. Referring to study by Alazam (2012), there is a significant correlation between frequent ICT use in the classroom and teacher ICT skills. In this uncertain condition, practicum teachers are expected more to adapt with cloud learning environment which were not available in the curricula of non-technology education program. Indeed, to embrace the 21st century challenges, they need to serve learning solution in the frame of qualified literacy and imposed digital media education (Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020), create lifelong learning professional development in the transformative process (Bhamani, 2020) and embed personality traits of ideal teachers (Baruch, 2016).

In the context of preparation program for ESL/EFL teachers, the ability in instructional classroom flow using the realities of the lesson (Farrell & Yang, 2019) is decisive to design for the future teachers. Teaching EFL also elaborated by Susanto (2019), in his study he said about A Qualitative Study of EFL English Teacher's Perceptions towards Teaching Vocabulary Using Word Games for Junior High Schools in Semarang Central Java: to Use or To Reject? And also Susanto (2019) said about The Use and Functions of English Discourse Markers (EDMs) in EFL Students Writing at University in Indonesia. Providing ICT and learning opportunities for the future teachers are among other important programs in the training (Konig, et.al., 2020). Therefore, the preparation program should highlight teaching skills, professional characteristics, and classroom climate (Cohen, et.al., 2010) as the process for qualified teachers.

A well-designed curriculum for the qualified teachers should be supported by learning infrastructures. Verily, the readiness of ICT infrastructure, like internet devices, (Elmunsyah, et.al., 2012) and its implementation are two major issues (Hermawan, et.al, 2018) in Indonesian education setting and contexts. This study aimed at investigating the questions; 1) Did internet devices, specifically wi-fi device, avail at schools in Pekanbaru municipality and how was the quality of internet connectivity in the online learning?, and 2) What learning applications were dominantly used by the practicum teachers in the schools with stable internet connectivity?

METHOD

The design of this research was descriptive. The researchers used a questionnaire to portray the availability of internet device (wi-fi), and the degree of participants' opinion on quality of internet signal and learning applications used by practicum teachers at nine public schools in Pekanbaru Municipality during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants of this study were students of English Education Program at Universitas Lancang Kuning conducting practice teaching at the public schools in Pekanbaru

municipality for duration four months calendar. The number of participants involved in the online survey were 47 out of 51 students conducting the practice teaching.

In collecting the data, the researchers distributed twenty seven questions in the questionnaire through WhatsApp at the end of practice teaching (PPL) program. The questions were divided into two main sections; 1) the availability of wi-fi devices and quality of internet connectivity, 2) the learning applications used for teaching and learning purposes, as well as the opportunities of giving and receiving feedback in the teaching and process. The students' responses in the four Likert-scales (strongly agree to strongly disagree) and five Likert-scales (Always to Never) were analyzed separately by using percentage and mean score. The mean scores in each category were interpreted to uncover the degree of participants' opinions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

In this findings section, the researchers only presented major data of the 27 closed-ended questions of the online questionnaire. In other words, the researchers extracted information in order to answer the research questions.

1. The availability internet devices (wi-fi) and the quality of internet signal at schools in Pekanbaru municipality

To begin the findings, the researchers presented data in terms of compulsory online teaching activities required by the school administrators to be implementd by the practicum teachers.

Sekolah mewajibkan mahasiswa PPL melaksanakan pertemuan/mengajar secara online (daring) selama pandemi COVID-19
47 responses

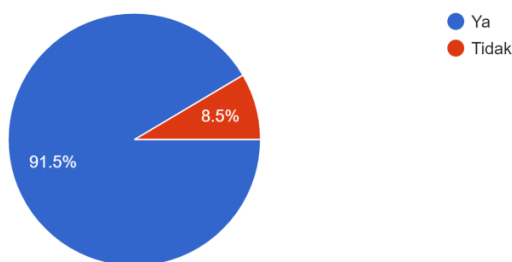


Figure 1 Compulsory Online Teaching

From the figure 1, it was found that 43 practicum teachers (91.5%) should conduct teaching activities in an online mode and 4 practicum teachers claimed that they were not obliged to conduct online teaching. To acquire accurate information, the researchers clarified the data by making short telephone interview to the practicum teachers. The information collected from the participants stated that one participant conducted practice teaching in the outskirt area of Pekanbaru, where face to face meetings were not banned. The other three respondents stated that they were situated in the cross border of Pekanbaru and other regencies in Riau Province, demographically in the adjacent area of palm oil plantation, where internet signals were severely unstable. The three practicum teachers distributed learning materials through

WhatsApp chat with delayed messages. They initiated to ask students to submit the assignments directly to the school.

In order to answer the first research question, the researchers used four Likert-scales consisted of Strongly Agree (score 4), Agree (score 3), Disagree (score 2) and Strongly Disagree (score 1). The information received from the respondents was presented in the following figure:

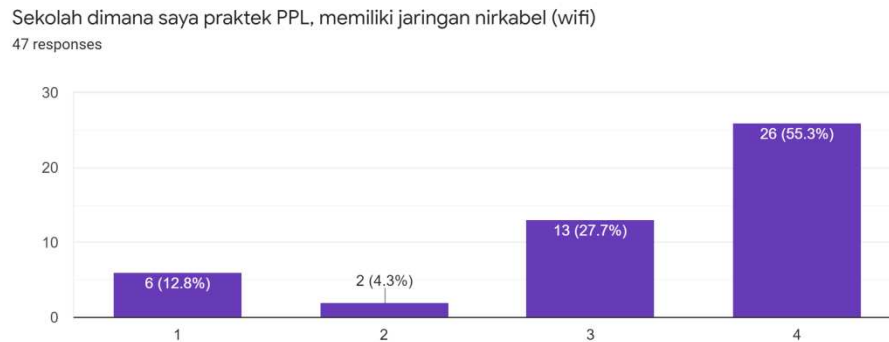


Figure 2 The Availability of Internet device (wi-fi)

The figure 2 clearly showed that the dominant answer was at the strongly agree (55.3%) followed by agree (27.7%). It meant that majority of respondents, 39 respondents (83%), stated that the wi-fi devices were available and installed in the schools, and only 8 respondents stated disagreement on the availability of wi-fi device. In other words, the majority share of internet device showed a big opportunity of the practicum teachers to access internet by using school wi-fi.

To portray the quality of internet signals, the researchers illustrated them in the figure 3 below:



Figure 3 Quality of internet Signal

The figure 3 above showed 23 respondents agree (48.9%) on the quality of a good internet signal. It was followed by a perception on strongly agree (38.3%). The data also depicted that 41 respondents (87.2%) stated the agreement on the availability of stable internet connectivity.

In crosschecking the information, the researchers found a slight difference between the data gained in the figure 1 and the figure 3. In the figure 1, it was stated that four respondents did not conduct online learning activities due to the school location. Indeed, the figure 3 showed a condition of internet signal coverage (connectivity) in the schools, where practicum teachers conducted the practice teaching. To be precise, the gap was only in the quality of internet signal, but not on the availability of the device.

In this finding analysis, the researchers highlighted that majority of respondents (82%) stated that schools in Pekanbaru municipality had internet device (wi-fi). In case schools did not have the internet device, this study also found that 87 % of total respondents agree the internet signal coverage were relatively good. Further, the researchers found there was a slight difference between data, referring to respondents' information, on number of schools owning internet device (8) and internet signal quality (6). The data gap could be interpreted that though the two schools did not have the internet device (wi-fi), the internet signal quality was not stable. In other words, the practicum teachers, still, could access internet by using their own smartphone device.

2. The learning applications mostly used by practicum teachers in the schools with stable internet connectivity

To answer this research question, the researchers selected and categorized the participants' responses based on stable internet signal connectivity and those with unstable internet signal in the schools. The following table illustrated responses with stable internet signal connectivity:

Table 1 Schools with Stable Internet Signal

Questions:	Participants	Mean Score
Q11. Using search engine (Google) to find learning materials	41	4
Q12. Using online media (youtube) to download video for learning activities	41	4
Q.13 Using video conference (zoom, etc) to convey teaching materials COVID-19	41	4
Q17. Using Google Classroom (and similar apps) to convey learning materials	41	4
Q18. Using Google Classroom (and similar apps) to convey assignments for students	41	4
Q19. Using Google Classroom (and similar apps) to give and take feedbacks of the assignments	41	4
Q20. Using Google form for quiz	41	4

From the table above, it was found that practicum teachers in the schools with stable internet signal used various learning applications to convey teaching practices. Zoom, Google Form and Google Classroom (and similar apps) were frequently (often) used by the practicum teachers in that circumstance.

The usage of Zoom video conference could substitute partially the face to face meeting. To this situation, the practicum teacher could check students' presence by looking at the join status at the application. Also, the teacher could convey various teaching materials

interactively using learning media that they prepared. To add, student had chance to address question(s) with a direct response from the teacher.

Similarly, the use of Google Classroom facilitated practicum teachers to convey various teaching materials. The teacher could post videos, as well as other interesting websites, and give quiz with a time limit of assignment submission. The teachers were able to detect students' presence and recorded them by checking out the feature on the application. However, this application did not have feature of video conferencing that facilitate student-teacher direct interaction on screen.

In conducting quiz and other tests, the practicum teacher used Google Form to collect information about students' comprehension on the materials given. This application enables students to get score within a short period of time, as long as the teacher used multiple choice questions and or short answer questions with the answer key. In term of long answer key, the teachers may use this application to do scoring and send the result to the students.

In the circumstance of lower and unstable internet signal, the practicum teachers could not do video conferencing and used Google Classroom (and similar apps) to convey teaching materials to students. Most of them used WhattsApp chat as illustrated in the table 2.

Table 2 *Schools with Unstable Internet Signal*

Questions:	Participants	Mean Score
Q14. Using WhattsApp chat to convey learning materials	5	4
Q15. Using WhattsApp chat to give assignments for students	5	4
Q.16 Using WhattsApp chat to give and take feedbacks for students	5	4

From the table above, there were five practicum teachers that used WhattsApp application frequently in the learning activities. While, one practicum teacher participating in this study claimed that the internet connection was severely unstable. Those five practicum teachers were situated in the unstable internet signal (connectivity) where they conveyed learning materials by using delayed Whattsapp chat. Though, it was found that there were some other practicum teachers locating in the stable internet signal that used WhattsApp, but the frequency of using WhattsApp chat was in the level of 'Seldom'

Discussion

The condition of COVID-19 pandemic has caused uncertainty for teachers to manage face to face teaching and learning activities. In the public discussion at various media, like TV and facebook, some parents were sick of the online learning and proposed a face to face school meeting. They were anxious to their students' development in term of cognitive and affective aspects. Indeed, the face to face interaction facilitated students to have a sense of cognitive engagement in the distance (Joo, et.al, 2014). This condition was also supported by (Prasetyaningsih, 2020) that the online learning was not effective, especially for the slow learners. Many of them could not comprehend learning materials conveyed by the teacher. Other findings showed the impact of school locked down to children from lower economic family. According to Bonal and Gonzales (2020), children from socially disadvantaged

families had few learning opportunities both in terms of time and learning experiences (schoolwork and maintenance of after-school activities).

However, in the public discussion itself, there was no firm answer toward the solution for the Learning from Home. Therefore, the online learning, to this end, is still the necessity to ensure the student's safety (Dhawan, 2020) and governments are also demanded to ensure the availability of children with disadvantaged-family background (Safe to Learn, 2020).

The use of various online learning applications in the stable internet signal, as found in this study, was supported by Dhawan (2020) that the COVID-19 pandemic shares a big impact for Start Up companies in developing learning applications. Yet, the use of application like Google Classroom and Zoom were among the most familiar online learning media used by teachers and students. A'yun et.al. (2021) recommended that the use of Google Classroom as an online learning platform during the COVID-19 pandemic should be continued. In advance, Rohman, et.al. (2020) argued that most students receive online learning using the Google Classroom application due to several considerations such as ease of access. Though with some constraints, Google Classroom was still effective to use for online learning mode (Alim, 2019).

The use of Zoom meeting as the learning media has been a discussion in academic domain as well. Guzacheva (2021) found that Zoom technology is a great tool for making learning in the subject of English for medical students. This application enabled students to use the chat box with other learners and they could see everyone's camera and listen to everyone. Suadi (2021) also found similar result toward the use of Zoom meeting. Although the availability and slow speed internet connection were being problems among students, the use of this platform in ELT was rated effective and efficient in terms of time, place and expense (Suadi, 2021). Though some other studies found its benefit, this learning platform had major constraint in term of stable internet signal (connectivity) that caused intermittent voice (Laili & Nashir, 2020).

Concerning the debate in the use of online learning platforms, the practicum teacher should focus on the learning delivery. As the ideal future teachers, they are demanded to apply more varieties of learning activities (Herbimo, 2020) and are able to develop learning materials (Syahdan, 2018) to ensure students' consistency in the classroom participation. In addition, the teachers, also, need to ensure learning assessment was carefully designed to develop students' critical thinking skill (Syahdan, 2014) and to minimize the doubt on the effectiveness of online assessment methods in term of task honestly (Perwitasari, et.al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at answering questions on internet devices (wi-fi) avail at schools in Pekanbaru municipality, the condition of network signal (stable and unstable connectivity), and learning applications dominantly used in the schools with stable internet connectivity. The findings revealed that most schools (83%) have wi-fi devices accessed by practice teachers for teaching activities. With this device, practice teachers used more diverse applications (Google Classroom, Google Form and Zoom video conference) more frequently (often), showed in the mean score 4.0, to convey learning materials and tasks delivery. In the schools with unstable internet connectivity, they chose Whatsapp application to convey learning activities, including the tasks delivery. In conclusion, the availability of good wi-fi device supports practice teachers in conducting online teaching activities during the

pandemic which they can maximize more diverse applications, namely Google Classroom, Google Form and Zoom conference.

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