

Teachers' Perceptions towards the Practice of Assessment in Online Classroom during Pandemic of Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the teachers' perceptions towards online assessment due to the Covid-19 pandemic, including how the practice went, the challenges faced, and what teachers' opinions were. Four English teachers of secondary schools participated in this study. The interview sections were employed to gather data on teachers' perceptions of the online assessment practice. Then, the data were analyzed qualitatively. Finally, this study found out that the practice of online assessment depended much on technology. The teachers exploited many online software and applications to support the assessment process. The technology was also able to assess the students formatively and summatively. Furthermore, the challenges faced by the teachers were the internet connection problem, lack of physical communication with the students, the impracticality of scoring, unmotivated students, and low integrity of students' results. Finally, the teachers' perceptions of the online assessment were positive and negative. The teachers felt excited to try the new technology to boost the assessment process. However, many of them also preferred the offline class to assess the students.

Keywords: online class, online assessment, teachers' perceptions

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru terhadap asesmen daring sehubungan dengan pandemi Covid-19, meliputi bagaimana praktik asesmen berjalan, kendala yang dihadapi, dan pendapat para guru. Empat guru Bahasa Inggris dari beberapa Sekolah Menengah Pertama berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Wawancara dilakukan kepada para guru untuk mengumpulkan data. Kemudian, data yang terkumpul dianalisis secara kualitatif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik asesmen secara daring bergantung pada teknologi. Para guru menggunakan beragam perangkat lunak dan aplikasi untuk mendukung proses asesmen daring mereka. Teknologi yang digunakan dapat menilai hasil kerja siswa secara formatif dan sumatif. Akan tetapi, beberapa kendala juga dihadapi oleh para guru, seperti lambatnya koneksi internet, kurangnya interaksi secara langsung, rumitnya proses penilaian, para siswa yang kurang termotivasi, dan rendahnya integritas dari hasil kerja siswa. Terakhir, persepsi guru terhadap asesmen secara daring menunjukkan hasil positif dan negatif. Para guru senang untuk mencoba teknologi baru untuk mendukung proses asesmen, tetapi beberapa dari mereka merasa lebih nyaman untuk menilai para siswa secara langsung di dalam kelas.

Kata kunci: kelas daring, asesmen daring, persepsi guru

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of Covid-19 has become an international issue impacting the whole aspects of human life, including education. The educational program should adapt the practice to the suggestion of physical distancing to avoid spreading the virus. Moreover, the online class becomes the most appropriate choice to keep the teaching and learning process running. In Indonesia, the minister of education also highly suggested moving the conventional instructional design into the virtual class (Dewi et al., 2021). The particular Curriculum adapted to the pandemic was even created to support the virtual class. The role of technology also makes the teachers' duties to transfer knowledge more practical (Windiarti et al., 2019). The rapid development of the internet and virtual meeting applications fully assists teachers in creating attractive materials and lively interaction with their students. Therefore, even though the teachers and students are physically separated, they can keep learning and communicating in the offline class.

According to Feldman & Zucker (2002), the online class is the teaching and learning process mediated by the internet. Internet as the primary tool, plays a significant role in determining the success of the instructional program. Many platforms can be exploited to support online class runs, such as live chat, audio and video conference, and e-mail. The platforms which are easy to access due to the rapid growth of the internet can make the classes be done anytime and anywhere (Windiarti et al., 2019). As a result, the teaching and learning process can be more practical. Feldman & Zucker (2002) also argue that online classes can make students more active, reflective, and engaged. However, the online class is about transferring knowledge efficiently and needs to cover another aspect of the instructional program, assessing the students' performances.

Even though the teachers are in different places with the students during the online class, they need to assess their students. As a vital element of the teaching and learning process (Cheng & Fox, 2017), assessment is helpful to provide information on students' performances (Brown, 2004). It becomes the tool to measure the students' achievement and evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional program. However, the way the teachers assess their students in the online class is different from how they assess in the offline class (Arend, 2007). The condition where the teachers and students are not physically close forms new adaptations for the assessment program. In the offline class, the students can do various physical activities to study their skills.

On the contrary, the activities of the students in the online class, which the teachers can assess, are highly related to the online platform. Despite the difference in technique, the online classroom assessment also needs to cover the same features as the offline class. The features of classroom assessment were promoted by Pelligrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser in 2001 (as cited in Mcvey (2017)). First, the assessment should pose the students' competencies. Second, the assessment should engage the students in the activities observed by the teachers. Furthermore, third, the assessment should have a method to interpret the result of students' performances. Hence, the difference of virtual class assessment only locates in the techniques.

Due to the different techniques of practicing between online and offline classes, the teachers require new adaptations to assess their students well. The teachers need to be familiar with and use various devices to support students' assessments. Familiarity is crucial since devices are the primary media utilized in the virtual class (Windiarti et al., 2019). The lack of computer experience can make the teachers more anxious to employ it (Öz, 2014b). Moreover, the teachers must also be creative in using supporting applications to assess the students. The

study of Todd (2020) showed that the teachers in Thailand employed some online applications to assist them in assessing the students, such as Google Form, Google Classroom, and LEB2, which the university's learning management system studied. However, the study did not explain deeper the detail of the use. Further exploration of how the teachers assess the virtual class was investigated in this study.

Furthermore, the new adaptations bring assistance for the teachers to assess the students and some challenges. Some researchers have also discussed the issue (Abduh, 2021; Remmi & Hashim, 2021; Todd, 2020; Windiarti et al., 2019). The study of Abduh showed that, despite the positive teachers' perceptions towards online assessment, the teachers kept facing some severe challenges in assessing the students. The challenges are the lack of physical communication, assessing speaking and translating, cheating and plagiarism risk, mechanical troubles, and many students' assessments. Besides, the study also stated that the most critical challenge was the integrity of the assessment since there was a high risk that the students' results were not pure. The study of Remmi & Hashim (2021) found that teachers' age, location, and facilities also became the challenges of students' assessments, especially in using Online Formative Assessment Tools (OFAT). The more senior teachers faced more difficulties operating the devices to assess the students than the younger teachers. Besides, the rural area schools also faced more challenges in implicating online assessment due to the lack of internet access and skills of utilizing the devices compared with the schools in urban areas. The technical problem also became the challenge found by Windiarti et al. (2019) study. Poor internet connection, software availability, and incapable students' skills to operate the devices came to be the challenges of the online assessment. The lack of teachers' knowledge in familiarizing the virtual system and time management also became another challenge. Meanwhile, the study of Todd (2020) mentioned that the teachers' challenges in assessing the students were the time spent communicating with the students and checking their results and the need for activities for checking students' understanding. Finally, some previous studies mentioned that the assessment process within the online classroom brought some challenges based on the teachers' perceptions.

Nevertheless, the samples of most previous studies were the university or randomly sampling teachers. The study where the teachers from the secondary level became the subjects was still limited. Thus, this study aimed to examine the perceptions of the secondary-level teachers, junior and senior high schools, towards students' assessment in the online classes. Furthermore, to achieve the aim, the research questions of the current study were created as below:

1. How do the teachers assess the students within the online class resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What are the challenges faced by the teachers in assessing the students within the online class resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic?
3. What are the teachers' opinions towards the practice of students' assessment within the online class resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic

METHOD

Four English teachers participated in this study by expressing their experiences and feelings towards students' assessment within the online classes. They were the teachers of secondary schools in the urban areas of Sidoarjo and Surabaya, Indonesia. Three female teachers and one male teacher aged 23 to 25 with not more than six years of teaching experience contributed to

give their experiences in assessing the students in the virtual classes. Furthermore, the researchers purposively selected young teachers since they tended to have better digital literacy compared to the senior teachers (Remmi & Hashim, 2021). Thus, the researcher expected to get relevant data for this study. Moreover, the purposive sampling done by the researcher was based on the (Ary et al., 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018) stating that the participants of the study should be adapted to the study's needs.

To achieve the goal, the researcher held some interview sections to gather the data from the participants. Firstly, the researcher asked the willingness of the participants to be the source of this study's data. Then, she called all of the participants personally. During the interview sections, the researcher used the interview guidelines as assistance. Thus, she could get the appropriate and required data. Thirteen questions were delivered to the participants asking about their backgrounds, strategies for online assessment challenges faced and solutions, feelings about doing the online assessment, and hopes for future practice. Furthermore, the interviews were semi-structured. Hence, the researcher might develop the questions based on the situation, and the interviewee might develop specific issues (Dörnyei, 2011). Moreover, the researcher recorded the interview results, which then be transcribed and analyzed further.

After the data finished to gather, the researcher will analyze them. The researcher used the qualitative data analysis techniques Ary et al. (2014) promoted, including familiarizing and organizing, coding and reducing, and interpreting and presenting. In this study, familiarizing and organizing includes the researcher who read the results of the questionnaires and organized them so that the data were easy to understand. Next, coding and reducing include the researcher who chose the essential details only and eliminated the unimportant ones. Then, the chosen data were classified and coded into themes to assist the researcher in understanding the data quickly. Finally, interpreting and presenting made the researcher take the meaning of the data and conclude them to answer the research questions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The interview toward four EFL teachers were conducted. The data were analyzed qualitatively to answer all of the research questions, including how the teachers assess the students in the online classroom, challenges that they faced, and their perceptions regarding the online assessment practice. The results are elaborated below.

HOW THE TEACHERS ASSESS THE STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE CLASS

The interview sections toward four secondary school English teachers showed that all participants could exploit the technology to assess the students. The teachers employed much software supporting virtual meetings, document-making, and personal chat. It was similar to the study of Todd (2020), finding out that online applications, such as Zoom and Google Classroom, were beneficial to assist the teachers in assessing the students. Thus, it could seem that such applications and software were the leading and most common platforms used in online assessment.

Furthermore, the interview results also showed that the technology was used to help the teachers providing both formative and summative assessments. For formative assessment, the teachers exploited technology to check the students' learning progress in synchronous and asynchronous classes. The exercises and quizzes were given to the students to measure the

students' progress. Moreover, the teachers also argued that the live quizzes and worksheets were beneficial to make the class not monotonous. It was in line with the argument of Pelligrino, Chudowsky, and Glaser in 2001 (as cited in Mcvey (2017)) that the assessment should engage the students to achieve the objective well. However, traditional exercises still dominated the assessment process, making live quizzes and worksheets insufficient to promote engagement.

Meanwhile, for summative assessment, the teachers also exploited the technology to create the test measuring the students' comprehension at the end of the course. The teachers required the students to access and do the test with the time allocation set by the teachers. Then, the teachers would check and score the results. However, most teachers only used the technology to measure the students' comprehension. The skills of the students to use the language in real context were lacked to assess. The assessment measuring the performances of the students in using the language communicatively was urgently required since using the language for authentic communication is the objective of language learning.

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TEACHERS WHILE ASSESSING THE STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE CLASS

The results of the teachers' interviews were classified and resulted in five challenges faced by the EFL teachers of junior high schools in assessing their students in the online classroom. The challenges are further elaborated below.

POOR INTERNET CONNECTION

Most teachers commented on their problems in dealing with the internet connection. They said there were many moments when the students had to deal with connection problems. Since the online class process depends much on the internet (Feldman & Zucker, 2002), the internet connection troubles the teaching and learning process. Unfortunately, the strength of the internet connection is uncontrollable. It depends on the location, where the different locations might have different signal strengths (Windiarti et al., 2019). Commonly, the internet connection in urban areas is better than connecting in rural areas (Remmi & Hashim, 2021). However, the different strengths of internet connection also appeared among the students despite living in the urban areas. Consequently, their teaching and learning processes got distracted. The students might skip the information, and the teachers might skip checking the students, impacting the assessment process. Nevertheless, the interview results found that the teachers could solve the problem by having a personal virtual meeting with troubled students as they could get a better internet connection. However, this also created a new challenge for the teachers since they would need more time and energy (Abduh, 2021).

LACK OF PHYSICAL COMMUNICATION

The second challenge in the online assessment was the lack of physical communication. The practice of online class where the teachers and students only meet virtually make the bonding between them not well-built. The study participants stated that they did not have many opportunities to know and understand their students' characteristics. The virtual meeting made them hard to be close with the students. The limited time of teaching and the limited access to reach their students acted as obstacles for the teachers to build intimacy. Consequently, the teachers could only assess the language comprehensions of the students but not the language

skills mastery (Todd, 2020). It also showed that the assessment done within the online class might not measure the incomplete skills of the students. Thus, it was proven that the lack of physical communication troubled the practice of students' online assessments (Abduh, 2021). Nevertheless, the solution may overcome the problem by letting the students report their works on the online platform (Todd, 2020). Therefore, the students will be able to present and communicate interactively, and the teachers can result in more complete students' progress.

DIFFICULT SCORING PROCESS

Third, the online assessment was hard to score. The interview results revealed that some teachers faced difficulty in scoring the students' results. The reliability of the teachers might be low due to the many documents to check. It was also in line with Abduh's (2021) study finding out that online assessment was exhausting since the teachers should have assessed so many documents. A participant also stated that the late submission of the students' tasks worsened the scoring part. The assessment of some students' tasks should have been delayed due to the late submission. Thus, the teachers could not finish assessing the students' works in a time. Consequently, the teachers needed more time and energy to check and assess the students' works only (Todd, 2020). They also needed to spare time to make the learning materials. Hence, assessing the students online was exhausting for the teachers.

UNMOTIVATED STUDENTS

The fourth challenge is the unmotivated students. Technology use can influence the students' motivation (Windarti et al., 2019). Technology can increase or decrease students' motivation. However, the interview results showed that online assessments that depended much on traditional exercises made the program boring. Even though the interview results showed that some participants provided live quizzes and worksheets, their application was still limited. The traditional exercises still dominated the assessment process, which made the use of live quizzes and worksheets did not remove the boredom much. Besides, the teacher also needed to compete with the students' distractions during learning from home (Todd, 2020). The distractions from the other family members, TV, or pets might get annoyed in the instructional design program since it could make the students not focus on the teachers. If the distractions at home were more attractive than the programs presented by the teachers, the students would not be enthusiastic about joining the teaching and learning program. At the same time, the student's motivation is crucial for the instructional program (Remmi & Hashim, 2021). It took a crucial role in the instructional program, especially the assessment practice. When the students do not pay full attention to the program, they cannot show their best performances. As a result, the teachers cannot get accurate data for their assessment results toward their students.

POOR INTEGRITY OF STUDENTS' WORKS

Finally, the last challenge faced by the teachers in the online assessment was the poor integrity of the results. The participants stated that the teachers and students who were not in the exact location limited the class control. The teachers could not monitor the students fully, especially while doing the tasks. Hence, the tendency for plagiarism and cheating increased (Abduh, 2021). It produces bias for the assessment results. The results might not be able to show the actual progress and achievement of the students. Therefore, the online assessment brought the teachers inaccurate and valid data revealing the students' developments. In addition, it was the

wish of the teachers to have any application or strategy which can detect the cheating that the students did. If the teachers have such tools or techniques, they would be less hesitant with the students' task results.

TEACHERS' OPINIONS TOWARDS THE PRACTICE OF ONLINE ASSESSMENT

The interview sections revealed that the teachers had positive and negative perceptions of online assessment practice. Some participants said the new online assessment brought a thrilling experience to the practice. Exploring many new things became an exciting activity for them.

Datum 1

"I think it's thrilling to explore new applications, and I can make the students explore it, too.... but I also need to double work because I need to make the digital assessment and materials. It takes much of my time."

However, the negative perception also appeared among the teachers. They stated that the assessment done online was challenging and exhausting. The teachers needed to double work for making and using the assessment tools (Abduh, 2021). The teachers also need more time and energy to face the late submission of the students.

Datum 2

"It's hard to do. I can't finish my assessment in time. Many students also don't submit the tasks, so there are some scores which are skipped."

Datum 3

"...It is so difficult to do. I also get puzzled because there is not direct (physical) interaction with the students, so the assessment process only depends on the test."

Moreover, the situation that made the online assessment did not bring practicality for the teachers. The teachers preferred the assessment done offline within the class (Öz, 2014). They hoped that the offline class would be opened soon. Hence, they could provide the normal-offline assessment again.

Therefore, even though online assessment becomes the new thing that makes the teachers enthusiastic to explore many things, the teachers keep preferring on offline assessment due to the practicality.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study found that the current online class assessment practice is monotonous. A more profound exploration of various software and applications is required to produce the proper and engaging assessment procedure. Moreover, this study also found that the practice of online assessment brought positive and negative perspectives. Despite the practicality, the teachers also faced some challenges, which made them prefer the offline class.

Being further, the results of this study are significant for teachers and policymakers. This study promoted some suggestions regarding the challenges faced by the participants, which can be beneficial for the other teachers in facing similar challenges in the online assessment process. Besides, this study can also help the policymakers evaluate the online

class's practice, especially in the assessment process. Therefore, the policymakers can look for solutions regarding the teachers' challenges and obstacles regarding online assessment practice.

Lastly, this researcher also admits that this study has many flaws that the following research requires to be covered. Since this study only relied on the qualitative collection and analysis data, the subsequent study may investigate the issue based on the quantitative perspective. Hence, the issue may be further investigated.

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