The Utilization of Technological Tools for Virtual Drama Performance in Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract. Literature in ELT course has been carried out for years with a drama performance as one of the products of the course. However, the performance was no longer conducted due to the coronavirus outbreak. This study aimed at elaborating the process and the use of technological tools (Zoom, Canva, and Pinterest) to create drama performance virtually. The participants of the study were a lecturer and 34 students who have joined the course. In this qualitative case study, the data were gathered by using interview and observation. The data obtained were analyzed with multiple levels of analysis and validated with triangulation and member checking. They were analyzed by using five analytic stages: organizing and planning the results, paying attention to all data, coding the data, generating the description and themes, and reflecting descriptions and themes. The research revealed that the students could play multiple roles as collaborator, communicator, critical thinker, and creator to create two minutes videos, to write drama script collaboratively, and to produce a virtual drama performance by utilizing the technological tools to the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*.

Keywords: literature in ELT, Zoom platform, Canva application, Pinterest, virtual drama performance

1 Introduction

The 2019 Corona Virus (Covid-19) has dramatically ravaged all lines of life since March 2020. The policy taken by many countries including Indonesia by disbanding all educational activities has forced the government and related agencies to present alternative educational processes for students and students who cannot carry out the educational process in educational institutions (Arribathi, et al., 2021; Erümit, 2021). This is done as an effort to prevent the spread of Covid-19 transmission

Learning in universities at pre-pandemic is usually through offline or blended learning modes. Learning after the corona virus outbreak has drastically shifted to online mode where the university prepares a distance learning system in the form of a Learning Management System that accommodates all lecturers to prepare virtual learning processes (Kasar, et al., 2021; Kundu, et al., 2021; & Chahkandi, 2021). The Literature in ELT course as one of the practical courses in the English Education study program experienced a major impact from the spread of the corona virus outbreak. Students cannot perform live drama performances. Regarding drama performances, based on informal interviews through the WhatsApp application that the author conducted with several lecturers who teach literature courses in English learning, it was found that they had never performed drama performance in literature courses, especially after the spreading of corona virus pandemic.

Virtual drama, a show that is performed or broadcasted online through certain applications, has two challenges that the cast will face (Gallagher, et al., 2020; Barekat, et al, 2020; & Schenker, 2020). Virtual drama that has emerged since the Covid-19 pandemic will not end the creativity of artists in their work. The most important things in staging a virtual drama are the network and data quota. Virtual drama will be successful if the internet network in the area of the actor is smooth. One example is that virtual drama created in the Zoom application will eat up large quotas and fast networks. Another challenge faced by the virtual drama cast is the small number of viewers who are present to witness their performance. The audience constraint because most people will think that virtual drama is not as interesting as offline drama. The cast must be able to create a virtual drama that is interesting and not boring for the audience. Thus, the challenges faced by virtual drama actors when creating online dramas are not only about data networks but also the interests of their drama viewers.

There are several reasons for virtual drama to take place in this pandemic. According to Berezki & Karpati (2021) virtual drama played through digital technology can be a reason of convenience and security. Dramas are shown virtually using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Google Meet. Students do not have to worry about how many clothes they have to bring and wear. They just need to take their laptop, turn it on and play the show. One essential thing due to the pandemic era, the students under the recent study just waited their drama costumes at home from the lecturer that the online driver delivered them one by one. Meanwhile, Senderoff (2021) revealed that educators must adjust the use of drama in learning to keep up with technological and cultural changes that occur in educational institutions. For the same reason Zhang (2021) stated the following, "… the students were interested in the entertaining platform provided by drama- based pedagogy." Another reason is that virtual drama provides students with a break after studying, but at the same time it can also serve as a self-development. After spending a long time at home virtually without any meaningful interaction with friends, they may feel bored and need to try a new way that fulfills both conditions, reduces boredom and provides good memories even if indirectly. Therefore, virtual drama using the latest technology has become a trustworthy way. Virtual dramas that utilize social media technology need to be tested on students for convenience and the role of their companions as self-development and freeing students from boredom and motivating them to be active in theater activities after studying online (Peaches, 2021; Man, et al., 2021; Shanti & Jaafar, 2020).

Based on the explanation of virtual drama staging, it can be concluded that the internet prepares two strategies in carrying out the stage by using video conferencing tools and available resources as a strategy. In addition, by utilizing technology, virtual drama performances are an option for students to produce creativity as one of the outcomes of related subjects. The technology provides a lot of sophisticated tools for creativity. As focused by Davis & Phillips (2021) that they also analyzed online tools and technologies utilized as well as achievements/innovation created by the students. Then, the technological tools facilitate the students to generate the virtual drama. They are picture editor, movie editor, and web design program and platforms.

Furthermore, the use of Zoom, Canva, and Pinterest in virtual drama staging is very much needed. These modern devices are online platforms and applications that are used to create video conferencing and two- dimensional designs, having two advantages for virtual drama purposes. The zoom window becomes a creative and pedagogical tool for teachers.

According to Itmeizeh & Farah (2021), Zoom is an application that provides video communication, audio conferencing, chat, video, and webinars. Meanwhile, Furman (2021) states that their university, Florida State University, used Canvas as its LMS so they could develop a Canvas Org site to invite all students to participate while still providing oversight. They concluded that many of them spent time trying to give students a new perspective on the ancient world, but in this unprecedented historical moment. They think about how they will react to the current situation as students.

Accordingly, Zoom, Canva, and Pinterest are quite easy to use for virtual dramas as they only require an email registration to get into the app. After registering an email with the Zoom application, students immediately set up virtual meetings and invite people to join. Another advantage of these technological tools in virtual drama is that they provide a different experience for the audience as drama viewers and us as creators, which a live stage play will not provide. For the audience, watching dramas through the Zoom application can provide a more intimate euphoria, this is very different from the condition of the audience in a live stage play, where they cannot really see the facial expressions of the actors because the distance between the stage and the audience is quite far. Virtual drama through the Zoom application allows viewers to see it more closely and intimately, they can feel the feelings of the actors easily by watching it up close through their cellphone or computer screen. Then, Canva gives the freedom to create drama poster, can design the poster can be designed based on creativity and share it on social media. Based on the researcher's observations of the Canva application, it can be identified its features that can be used directly to maximize a virtual drama display either as a property for the cast or as a story setting with various images and selected background music. Meanwhile, Pinterest, similar to Canva, provides a lot of pictures and design; however, it is unusable to edit pictures. Therefore, for the sake of the virtual drama, Canva helps editing the pictures from Pinterest.

Thus, Canva is a graphic design platform that has user-friendly features created by Melanie Perkins that can be used in Zoom. Canva works on Zoom by creating a Zoom virtual background. This application provides lots of images, fonts, filters, and templates to work with. Unique virtual backgrounds can be made as creative as possible. The designs they create in Canva can be added to Zoom.

Referring to the phenomenon previously highlighted, a provoking idea emerged to do a virtual drama play. There are many previous studies related to drama performance (Gallagher, et al., 2020; Barekat, et al, 2020; & Schenker, 2020); however, research on virtual drama performances related to literature courses in English language learning has not been widely carried out both in Indonesia and abroad (Widyahening & Sitoresmi, 2021; Rogers, et al., 2020). Accordingly, this study initiated to highlight how virtual drama could be performed by utilizing Zoom and Canva; moreover, it was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic. it seemed to be a big challenge for the lecturer to virtually utilize the platform and application to make online drama. Therefore, this investigation intends to fill in the research gap by answering the research question: How were the technological tools utilized in creating virtual drama performance in the post-pandemic of Covid-19 spread?

It is expected that by studying the process of creating virtual drama with the utilization of Zoom, Canva, and Pinterest, we can, further, understand that no matter it was a pandemic era, motivation and creativity of both lecturer and students must come up in classrooms to produce something essential in education field. Most importantly, it must be considered that the students are in the technological era and the modern devices for creativity are not new for them .

2 Methodology

A qualitative case study design used in this study was employed to investigate a phenomenon that occurred. Tracy (2013) puts forward qualitative study as a method of examining, exploring, and comprehending the significance ascribed to a social or human issue. This study focused more on the utilization for Zoom platform and Canva application to create virtual drama performance at English Education study program of Universitas Sriwijaya. Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out that a case study is a form of investigation used in various fields. The writer focused on a detailed case study of an event, actions, process, one or more individuals. Besides, the research question of this study necessitated answers be sought via a case study to obtain a complete explanation of the phenomenon.

The study was carried out at one study program at Universitas Sriwijaya Palembang, accredited A. The participants of this study were the four semester students and the lecturer. They were selected because they experienced in literature class for one semester. There were 34 students observed, interviewed and became the focus of the study. The data were collected through interview and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. Meanwhile, there were some observations conducted; however, the learning processes were conducted through online meetings via Big Blue Button in Learning Management System (LMS). Therefore, most data collections were gathered via online, such as, line video calls and WhatsApp chat messenger.

In analyzing the data, an overview of the data analysis process was used. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe five steps of the overview data analysis process.

First, the raw data was prepared (transcribing the interview documents, typing up field notes, and sorting observation grid). Second, more attention was paid to the detail of the data to grasp the concept and intention of what the participants said and did. The third was to code all information to get the category and theme the data using in vivo coding. The fourth was generating the themes and descriptions based on the coding and categories. Before going to the last step, the triangulation was carried out to verify the validity and the accuracy of the results. Then, the member checking technique was conducted since it helped ensure whether the data were correct and avoided misinterpretation in analyzing the data. Therefore, the writer did follow-up interviews with all the samples. Reflecting descriptions and themes to shape data was the final stage, which involved writing a narrative passage to articulate the findings.

3 Findings and Discussion
Reading the Old English Epic Poem
Beowulf Collaboratively

Beowulf was written in Old English. For the sake of the study, the students were assigned to read the English version. Due to its long epic poem, it was collaboratively read by the students. The lecturer divided Beowulf poem to the 34 students into 34 parts. So, every student learnt and comprehended only their own part. The following is the excepts of some students dealing with the process of comprehending the epic poem.

At first I had difficulty in interpreting and understanding the meaning of the poem Beowulf, as for the activities I did to try to interpret the lyrics of the poem, namely from studying the words to the full and then experiencing *again what the meaning*

> *in the stanzas was. ... difficult to interpret it because of the comprehensive style of language, and it contained complicated diction, so I also exchanged ideas with my other friends to discuss whether the meaning was appropriate or not, and I also studied through the use of internet media and looked for its own meaning. through the use of the YouTube platform. When given the lyrics, I don't find the lyrics to the one assigned to me, I also look and interpret the lyrics of my friend, especially the lyrics before and after the lyrics assigned to me, because I hope there is a connection between the lyrics. And only after much deliberation and translation, finally found a meaning that fits the lyrics. (S1)*

> *The difficulty is when translating the text into Indonesian and then the text is understood and searched for its meaning because it is too poetic and then after that when I already have an idea of what happened to and understand the text then I summarize it into a text that is easy for me to understand then I translate it back into English   English.   With the distribution of texts, it makes it easier for students and makes it easier for students to work. (S2)*

> *At first, ...I read maybe about 7 to 9 times or even more to make sure that what I understand is true. Because first, ...I was confused, there were also some words that I didn't understand considering this is a poem that contains deep meaning in every each word, therefore what I did or the process that I did and went through at that time was to read from the beginning of the story (because my part is not too far from the beginning of the story), and also look for some information about the Beowulf on Google and other sources, for example, Youtube, trying to figure out and understand the storyline, then finally, write the conclusion of the story which is just the part I have got before, so, it's like "ohh this part turned out to be like this". So yeah, I have to go through some processes to understand my part of the story. ... to be honest, I had a discussion at that time with a friend whose part was right before my part, so my friend and I can be more sure that what we read and understand is true, and the story is connected. (S3)*

From interview, it was found that *Beowulf* was arduous that the students undertook to comprehend and really learnt it with their peers. However, as the students read their own part, they admitted that the most difficult aspect of reading to understand was the diction of the poem so that they did not fully understood the storyline of it. They looked up online dictionary to know the distinct words. It is relevant to some previous studies that students needed times to understand old poems to be dramatize in a performance (Adıgüzel, 2020; Hash, 2021; Sneed, 2021).

Creating Two Minutes Videos

Constructing creative videos was an old creativity that all the students had experienced in their previous courses, such as speaking and writing. Thus, raising up short videos by

utilizing application available in internet was apt for them to conduct. As soon as they could understand their parts, they were assigned to make a short story of their own part and to concoct their own videos. Meanwhile, the lecturer provided a brief illustration dealing with their own part as a guide for them to compose it. She told the students that they were going to perform virtual drama *Beowulf*, an epic poem of English literature by utilizing Zoom Platform, that they have read and made a short story of the epic. In other words, they have known their own part. In this 21st century, the students were expected to be more critical and creative. By making use of Canva application (Canva.com) and Pinterest, they might do critical and creative things to their on part by making narration, drawing setting, composing dialogue, playing music, writing text (subtitle), creating war situation by using English. In order that they were in the right track, the lecturer had provided a guide what to do with the part of the story. The number in brackets refers to the length of the video.
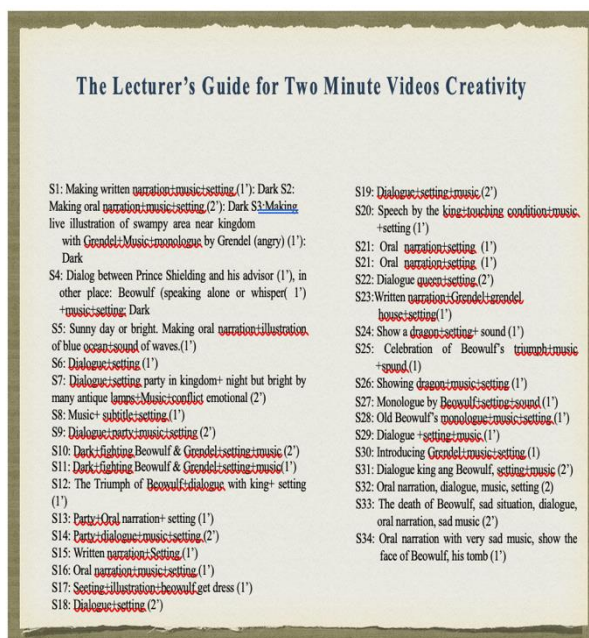

The Lecturer's Guide for Two Minute Videos Creativity

S1: Making written narration+music+setting (1'): Dark S2: Making oral narration+music+setting (2'): Dark S3:Making live illustration of swampy area near kingdom with Grendel+Music+monologue by Grendel (angry) (1'): Dark

S4: Dialog between Prince Shielding and his advisor (1'), in other place: Beowulf (speaking alone or whisper(1') +music+setting: Dark

S5: Sunny day or bright. Making oral narration+illustration. of blue ocean+sound of waves.(1')

S6: Dialogue+setting (1')

S7: Dialogue+setting party in kingdom+ night but bright by many antique lamps+Music+conflict emotional (2')

S8: Music+ subtitle+setting.(1')

S9: Dialogue+party+music+setting (2')

S10: Dark+fighting Beowulf & Grendel+setting+music (2')

S11: Dark+fighting Beowulf & Grendel+setting+music (1')

S12: The Triumph of Beowulf+dialogue with king+ setting (1')

S13: Party+Oral narration+ setting (1')

S14: Party+dialogue+music+setting.(2')

S15: Written narration+Setting (1')

S16: Oral narration+music+setting (1')

S17: Seeting+illustration+beowulf get dress (1')

S18: Dialogue+setting (2')

S19: Dialogue+setting+music (2')

S20: Speech by the king+touching condition+music. +setting (1')

S21: Oral narration+setting (1')

S21: Oral narration+setting (1')

S22: Dialogue queen+setting.(2')

S23:Written narration+Grendel+grendel house+setting(1')

S24: Show a dragon+setting+ sound (1')

S25: Celebration of Beowulf's triumph+music +sound.(1)

S26: Showing dragon+music+setting (1')

S27: Monologue by Beowulf+setting+sound (1')

S28: Old Beowulf's monologue+music+setting.(1')

S29: Dialogue +setting+music.(1')

S30: Introducing Grendel+music+setting (1)

S31: Dialogue king ang Beowulf, setting+music (2')

S32: Oral narration, dialogue, music, setting (2)

S33: The death of Beowulf, sad situation, dialogue, oral narration, sad music (2')

S34: Oral narration with very sad music, show the face of Beowulf, his tomb (1')

Figure 1: The Lecturer's Guide for Two Minute Videos Creativity

Figure 2: The Captures of Creating Two Minutes Video

Based on the guide of creating two minute creative videos, it can be inferred that all the videos rose up by the students could be categorized as good and excellent videos since they really followed the direction provided by the lecturer.

Writing Drama Script Collaboratively

The lecturer and the students were in a public chat of Big Blue Button (BBB), a feature in Learning Management System that is usable for direct learning, to discuss the showed by capturing a video created by a female student.

By utilizing Canva.com and Pinterest, they could make use of more than 250,000 free templates, 100 design types (social media posts, presentations, letters, and more) and hundreds of thousands of free photos and graphics. One of best videos would be elements of literary work in the epic poem *Beowulf*. By having such a deep discussion, the students had important information in it to initiate to write the drama script. Here is the discussion among the students. They identified the characters and characterization.

[13:48] HJ : Beowulf : someone who is brave, unyielding, responsible and is a true hero character. Grendel: Beowulf's enemy who is evil in nature and is known as a monster/demon/demon. King Hrothgar: very kind, wise and loved by his people.

[13:48] BM: Beowulf: brave, strong and loyal

[13:49] GA: Beowulf's characters: brave, honest, wise. Soldier Geats: loyal

[13:50] HA : 1.   The Mighty Beowulf, 2. Coast army of

Guard   : Watch   out for attacks from the sea, good (will show you the fastest way to Hrothgar's place), 3. Fortress guard: a little arrogant, carry out the mandate well and 4. Hrothgar: ok (allows Geats to come in to meet him)

[13:50] TM : 1. Beowulf: A brave hero, 2. Raja Hroghter: A character   who always has fun with his soldier, 3. King Hygelac: Beowulf's friend, and 4. Grendel: Terrible Monster

[13:51] AN : Beowulf : Brave, strong, and never give up

The lecturer's guide of creating two minutes video was still be used for script drafting. It also facilitated the students to write their own part. Besides, she also provided an e-book dealing with drama in ELT. However, the book did not elaborate drama script writing in-depth (Septiandini, et al., 2021). Therefore, the students strived to find other sources in some websites. It was scene 23 written by S23.
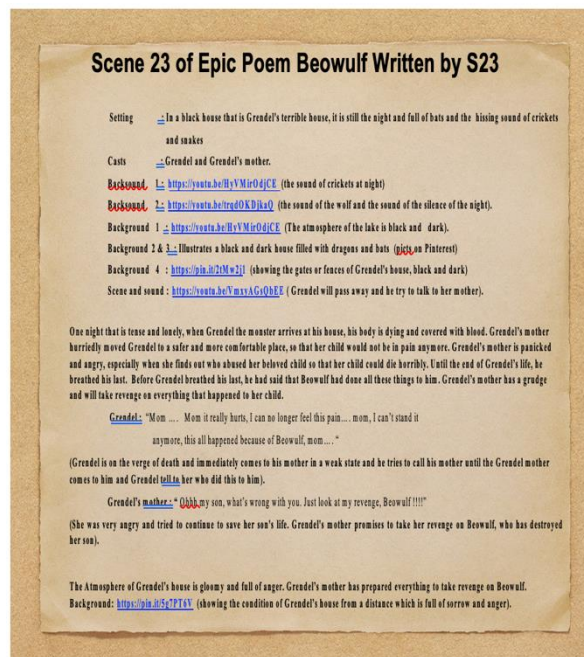

Figure 3: Scene 23 of *Beowulf* Written by S23

From the figure, it can be inferred that the student could write scene 23 correctly. She included   the characters, the dialogue, the setting, and the stage required. It was relevant to what Cole (1994) proposes about the screenplay fundamentals that starting from characterization as a basis to start with, the plot that moves the story, the scene as the building block, and the dialog among the characters.

Producing Virtual Drama Performance

The students produced the drama performance scene by scene. Since 34 students were involved in this study, they created 34 videos by utilizing Zoom, Canva, and Pinterest. By making use of the drama script they had finally composed, they practiced in several weeks, recorded their voice, and made efforts to harmonize the technological tools that help them produce virtual drama. It was found that some problems came up with the students when they got dressed with accessories they created and rent and made up their face to practice and record their real virtual performance, as it was showed in the following excerpts.

> *This virtual drama stage is quite challenging, there are quite a lot of obstacles to deal with such as poor signal problems, having to schedules with friends to be able to record scenes together, and also quota problems. Background photos also sometimes don't appear and errors. At first I was confused about performing this virtual drama because we were doing a virtual drama with an action genre so that the movements we did were limited, unlike offline dramas that could move flexibly.* (S8)

> *The obstacles faced were quite challenging, namely an unstable signal, then I repeated experiments to get my crown to appear in Zoom, by using a lot of lighting and using a green screen behind the object or my body. Due to this challenge, this virtual drama activity becomes very interesting, I gain a lot of knowledge at once, I am able to take advantage of technology in this modern drama.* (S23)

In addition to the problems previously mentioned, this figure also shows the difficulties and challenges faced by the students when they recorded their plays.

Figure 4: Screenshot of Some Scene in *Beowulf*

The figure indicated that 1) the crowns wore by the characters (scene #1 and #2) were unseen, 2) the main character Beowulf was great with the crown created by himself in order to cover his minus glasses, could not alter his virtual background due to the signal problem (scene #3 and #4), and 3) the queen and her two daughters looked perfect as if they were in the same platform (scene#5), however, sometimes one of her daughters disappeared due to the signal as well (scene#6).

Based on the whole findings from Reading collaboratively the old poem *Beowulf* to producing virtual drama performance, energic learning process could be identified. Both the lecturer and students were very active and productive during learning literature in ELT especially when producing drama performance virtually. They read the epic poem, wrote short stories, created two minutes videos, wrote the drama script, and produced the virtual drama performance. They liked the long energic process during the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. Though it was conducted in LMS both synchronously and asynchronously, they enjoyed the creative learning process. This is relevant to some responses of the students.

> *Assalammualaikum wr.wb... I really support virtual drama in this 4.0 revolution era, because this is related to the development of 4 skills which are very important for every student to have... therefore this virtual drama activity is very important. Good and must be developed more .... we learn to collaborate with friends, learn to be creative by including sound, editing background, practice skills in make up or make-up for girls especially... learn pronunciation, learn to voice intonation... learn to develop dialogue, so that these 4 skills are all in this virtual drama... I am very supportive of this virtual drama activity, considering that this is the era of technology, so learning is as much as possible associated with the use of technology.... . □ " !* (S23) 😊🙏🙏

Virtual drama is a drama that really caught my attention. Previously, I personally have never done virtual drama-making activities like this, but this time we were given a place to develop our creativity in making virtual dramas with the Zoom Meeting platform. At first many questions came to my mind such as "how to make a drama without meeting face to face?", "can I make a virtual drama?", "what should I prepare?" That's at a glance the question that was in my mind. (S24)

The existence of a pandemic is not a barrier for Ma'am to impart her knowledge to us. Although there are many obstacles when carrying out online classes, as well as virtual drama such as signal lost, blackout lights, slow loading and others. Ma'am sincerely and patiently taught us. Sorry if during the learning process, I and other friends sometimes the response is slow, ma'am. Thank you very much Ma'am for the knowledge, keep being Ma'am RI who is humble with her students. And don't forget to always take care of your health, ma'am. Thanks again, Ma'am. (S30)

This current study was strengthened by studies inferred by Cziboly & Bethlenfalvy (2020) that the lockdown period forced them to do an adaptation of their routines and to have second thoughts concerning with the effectiveness of teaching drama, Berezki & Karpati (2021) virtual drama played through digital technology can be a reason of convenience and security, and Senderoff (2021) revealed that educators must adjust the use of drama in learning to keep up with technological and cultural changes that occur in educational institutions Similarly, Tam (2020) discovered that the resilience of the teachers could be elevated by integrating play, processing drama, and integrating arts education in the pandemic crisis. However, Davis & Phillips (2021) found that a NSW secondary teacher responded their survey instrument. She put forward that no collaboration happened during the period of distance learning among the students. She got problems in distributing tasks and thought that the students only did other appealing activities rather than learning with peers. Consequently, only lecturers or teachers with their great struggle could survive in their teaching and learning process. The creativity and technological tools facilitated them to perpetual their habitual in order that virtual drama could be produced.

4 Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic at first haunted everyone, including lecturer and students. However, both of the lecturer and the students reconsidered their learning activity. By intensely communication, they put forward their critical and creative thinking to implement their process of learning collaboratively. Due to the pandemic era, they must conduct online mode of learning. As the university has provided a system for learning, they took advantage of the available features such as big blue button, discussion forum, and chatting. The learning process of virtual drama performance in Literature in ELT course was initiated by reading the poem, creating two minute videos, writing the script, and producing the drama virtually. The students vie -a-vie some challenges concerning with the process of writing and producing the drama but they can solve the problems. The technological tools offered by the internet were worthwhile, indeed. The students could come across the precise pictures and sort of music for the settings of the virtual drama. Once they obtained appropriate pictures from Pinterest, Canva facilitated to edit the pictures so that it could be set in Zoom platform.

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