

What Students Say and Do to Support Their Digital Learning

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Abstract. This study is a case study in relation to Covid-19 learning activities. There are 45 university students enrolled in this study with the same style of instructional model. From the data, it can be concluded that there are six aspects considered by the students. They are process, motivation, social media applications, access, effectiveness, and personal preference. From the six aspects, process is mostly highlighted by the students. They are full conscious that their digital learning requires their independency in achieving the learning goals. The social media application, e-learning platform and What's Apps, are also considered by the students as one aspect that influence their learning. The internet access is viewed as one crucial problems of the students' digital learning since most of the students live in rural areas. Based on the students' responses on their learning motivation, the students share that they felt unmotivated and less focus on the online learning. Lastly, the learning is less effective for the students as they have more limitation to the internet connection. However, the students realize that they have to be more active to update themselves in order to keep up with the changes given by the lecturers. Therefore, a number of suggestions and implications are discussed under the topic of digital literacy, positivity for transformation, self-regulated learning and reflective skills to support learning reflection..

Keywords: online learning, autonomous learning, reflection

1 Introduction

The swift mode of the English language teaching in Indonesia cannot be avoided during the pandemic Covid 19. Everyone is trying hard to deal with the condition of worried and anxiety. The condition during the pandemic does not allow people to get direct interaction through face-to-face meeting. They should keep themselves at homes and do everything they want to do at their homes [1]. With the use of digital media, people get interaction with others and to support their normal activity before the pandemic. Students are learning from home through their online learning media. Teachers teach their students through sufficient learning media and techniques and methods to support the achievement of the learning goals. Parents are working very hard to make their children learn during their job.

Everyone should stay at home and avoid the community services that require togetherness in each activity especially during the language teaching. The process of language teaching is also done in its limitation due to the pandemic. Both the students and the teachers should face different teaching and learning instruction that might not be familiar for them. The teachers should change their teaching media and styles to support the new ways of teaching during the pandemic. Teachers deliver lessons by launching online courses with short notice of time [2].

In Unimma, the use of MOCA (My Online Class) supports the teaching and learning process that can also be done through the use of other applications, such as, Zoom Meeting, Google Meet, and Cisco Webex Meeting. The use of other applications can improve the benefits of the Moca for both the students and the teachers from the applications that they can use such as video conferences, quizzes, games, and other synchronous interaction. Both the teachers and students have the possibility to level up their teaching and learning especially during the pandemic.

The digital learning teaching and learning shares different learning environment and behavior. The students and the teachers belong to different generations in which they have different characteristics. Today's language learning in university level belongs to digital natives while the teachers belong to digital immigrants. Students of digital natives are native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games, and internet while the digital immigrants refer to those who were not born into the digital natives but have adapted to the most aspects of technology [3]. The teacher and the students are from different eras that require different ways of teaching and learning [4]. This situation provides different learning environments for the teachers and students.

Before we move on to the process of teaching and learning through digital media, it is better to know a number of terminologies used in digital learning, i.e., blended learning, online learning, and computer-assisted language learning. The blended learning is done with the combination of both the offline and online learning during the teaching and learning process. The online learning is done fully through online media without face-to-face meeting. Finally, the use of computer-assisted language learning enables the teacher and the students to have the process of teaching and learning through the use of a computer that may be done both online and offline. The online learning is proven to be effective to accommodate the students in improving the values of the learning environment [5].

The process of teaching and learning during the pandemic in Unimma has a number of differences. First, the teaching is not done in a real face-to-face class since there is no possibility to gather in one room. The teaching and learning process is done through the use of digital media, Moca and another video conference (Zoom or Cisco Webex). Second, the duration of the teaching and learning is not equal to the real class meeting since there is a need to deal with the students' limitation in using credits for their digital learning, the internet connection, and also the gadget used to facilitate their learning. Third, the interaction is also different between the students and the teacher. In a real face-to-face class, the students are able to directly ask questions to address their difficulties and it is quite hard for the students to have it through digital learning. The teacher also felt it problematic to know the students' current condition during their learning as the teacher cannot directly see how the students' responses.

Another aspect of the teaching and learning is the students' learning characteristics during the pandemic. As mentioned earlier, the students are digital natives that are familiar with the use of internet and its technology. Digital natives work best with images than text and function well when networked and supported by digital technologies [6]. Digital natives have broad experiences of using technology in their daily life. Actually, they prefer to have blended learning instead of only offline learning. They know that the use of digital technology can improve their learning motivation and their curiosity. The existence of digital natives switches the education system to consider how the teaching should be changed [4]. With the multimodality of the modes used during the teaching and learning can also vary the teaching and learning that can not only increase the students' learning motivation but also their understanding of the learning materials because of the visual explanation through the digital media.

As the base of the teaching and learning processes, the education policy requires the teachers and the students to implement online learning during the pandemic. The ministry of education supports the teaching and learning by providing several solutions for the students and teacher to deal with the learning facilities. The educational policy should include the level of digital competency, computers, and internet connections [7]. The learning media are also prepared by the government using television, radio, and internet. The learning media ranges from the early child education until the senior high schools. While for the university students, the government gives free cards for the students to have the internet connection for their learning.

What are needed by the students to deal with the pandemic during their learning? It refers to their personal learning level. The students are not only required to complete the process of learning during the teacher's explanation but also to learn autonomously and independently. With the limited duration of teaching and learning, the students are expected to be able to keep their motivation to learn independently [8]. The roles of parents are also crucial in achieving the learning goals since the students need guidance and control from their parents. The parents' roles substitute the teacher's roles during the class. The parents should be able to help the students whenever they need help from their parents to deal with their learning problems. Then, the parents are also expected to be able to control the students' learning activity to succeed their learning. The supports from all aspects will play important factor to achieve the purpose of teaching.

2 Method

This study was a case study which focuses on the qualitative data. The purpose of this case study is to obtain and examine data in a context that involves selected members of research participants in a school community [9]. The data were gathered through questionnaire and interview with several respondents related to the study. There were 45 university students filled the questionnaires and interviewed about the use of online learning during the pandemic. The questionnaires and the interview were done through the use of digital media i.e., Google form and voice calls. The data were analyzed through a qualitative process of analysis starting from data transcribed verbatim, coding the data, analyzing the data, verification, and writing the findings of the study [10].

3 Results and Discussion

From the data gathered, it can be concluded that there are five aspects considered in this study dealing with the students' perspectives on digital learning during the pandemic Covid 19. They are process, motivation, social media applications, access, and effectiveness.

3.1 Process

The main process of the language teaching was done through the use of online learning. The teacher presents the learning materials at first and give more time to have more join construction and independent learning activities. Having online learning provides more opportunities for the students to explore themselves to have individual learning [11]. The

explanation is started by providing questions to get the first information about the students' current understanding. The questions addressed were about the learning materials and their implementation on their study. The explanation was done through zoom meeting or Google meet to share direct communication through video conference. The explanation was delivered by responding the students' feedback on the learning. One challenge to do this is the possibility of the students not to focus on the learning process since they did the learning activity at home. Learning at home might interrupt the students' concentration. Therefore, the teacher should be able to keep their students' attention on the teacher's explanation.

In addition, the students' responses on their learning activities is in term of its complexity. The students have to do a number of tasks in one day as the main learning process was done through autonomous learning. the task developed should stimulating learning conditions that promote interaction and collaboration to increase the students' interest and ability to learn autonomously [12]. They argue that the tasks are too complicated and should be done in a short time. With its practical problems such as the electricity, the internet connection, the gadget used to do the task, and also the students' learning endurance. When they face problems in completing the task, the students will lower their learning endurance if the electivity or the internet connection were not good enough. Many of the respondents' state that the use of internet connection and the electricity become the main problems during the digital learning process.

However, the students believe that the use of technology during their online learning support themselves to get more about the learning materials, they have the access to get more varied and updated learning materials. They justify that the mastery of reading skills will increase their understanding on the digital texts accessed through internet. Through scanning and skimming, the students may increase their reading speed and they can level up their reading comprehension. They argue that the more they read the more they understand the learning materials.

The students are required to train their critical reading skills to support their reading and independent learning process. The critical reading skills are taught by applying the use of higher order thinking skills. In addition to the implementation of online learning, the asynchronous interactions in online learning encouraging critical thinking are crucial to provide opportunities to process information, reflect, and investigate actively [13]. The higher order thinking skills include the lower order thinking skills. As mentioned in Bloom's taxonomy, the higher order thinking skills deals with remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Each level is supporting the next level until the final level, creating. The critical thinking skills are employed from the process of analyzing, evaluating, and creating. With the process of higher order thinking, the students are required to analyze the text. The next level is evaluating in which the students make judgment on their assessment about the text. Finally, the students are expected to be able to create similar text type after they analyze and evaluate the text. This will enable the students to be ready with the higher level of literacy, creating texts.

3.2 Motivation

Learning motivation belongs to one important aspect in students' learning achievement. Motivation to begin online learning is relevance to the technological competence and age that can predict the students' satisfaction and sustainable learning [14]. Learning motivation guide individual learning goals which include learning behavior, learning goals, efforts, cognition history, and strengthen and improve the outcomes. Both the intrinsic and extrinsic learning motivations complement each other. Intrinsic learning motivation comes from the inside of the learners while the extrinsic motivation is from the outer side of the students. The intrinsic

learning motivation can be the main reason why a learner study for example because he or she wants to study. While the extrinsic learning motivation is due to external factor such as reward. The instructor behaviors and social interactions enhance the learners' motivation on online leaning [15].

Another surprising response dealing with the students' learning motivation is not linear as they are digital natives. The students felt that they did not have high learning motivation to learn through digital learning. This is quite different from the result of a study conducted by Lin, Chen, and Liu that digital learning shares positive impacts on students learning motivation. Further, with the high learning motivation, the students can achieve remarkably learning achievement. They expect to have offline class since they can have total learning environment when they are at the campus. The students also felt that they cannot fully focus on the learning materials.

Actually, the digital learning motivation also increases the students' willingness to complete the tasks that are organized properly. It is logical if the students felt stressful during their learning since they have to deal with a number of tasks that will not give them time to relax. The students need to have exact learning tasks to make them complete the task well and positively. This is in line with the finding of the implementation of digital story telling that can increase the students' willingness to get involved into the learning activity [16]. Students' willingness belongs to one of the skills needed in the 21st century.

There are many applications that the students and the teacher can do during their digital learning, the two most applicable application that were used by the teacher during the teaching is the What's App and zoom meeting. To support the assignment that students should complete, the use of Moca is highlighted. The three media used are completing each other.

The what's App is used in the beginning of the class to make an appointment with the students. Both the teacher and students discuss what they will do during the class. They discuss the schedule and the main process of language teaching. The What's App communication is done through What's App Group that consists of the class members. This will minimize the miss communication between the teacher and the students. The use of What's App is also viewed as a beneficial one since almost of the students use this kind of application to communicate.

After the communication through What's App group, the class is done through Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting is done in a once full meeting around 40 minutes. This is done by considering the students' condition to have 100 minutes zoom class meeting that will consume their credits. Therefore, the class is done through zoom meeting first and followed by the use of Moca. In the zoom meeting, the teacher explains the learning materials and share discussion to the students. The question-and-answer session is done to provide more opportunities for the students to share their opinion, ideas, and understanding about the learning materials.

Finally, the use of Moca is to support the students' finalization of their learning. The students need to open the moca to know the teacher's explanation about the topic discussed and the task that the students need to complete. Moca is also used to support the maintenance of the students' task so they can directly know the projects they have to complete. This surely enables the students to measure their own progress on their learning. Moca keeps the students' track in learning and their works.

In relation to the students' learning facility, the students mostly used handphone that might be too small for them to read and communicate during the learning process. The students' eyes have different level of readability in relation to their eyes condition. Commonly, the students will have 30-60 minutes of span for the eyes readiness to read. Supported by the findings on a study measuring the online duration per day, in 144 minutes of 16 hours people are online [17].

The students need to take rest after their first period of digital reading to keep their eyes healthy and ready to study. The eyes focus also depends on their eyes condition. If they read too small words in a quite long time, they will make their eyes irritated. This will influence the students' learning achievement.

3.3 Access

In relation to the students' learning access, there are several facts about it. With the sudden changes due to the pandemic, the major challenges faced by the student from underdeveloped areas is the ineffective technology [18]. First, the students have limited access to the open access information due to limited internet connection. The students' limited access of internet is as a consequence of having economics problem. Many students do not have sufficient internet connection to access information by browsing in Google scholar and other trusted and beneficial websites. To have good internet connection and big data, the students should spend more money to buy the credit since the government and the university do not provide free internet access for the students.

Second, the device used by the students are also limited in terms of the specification. Many of the students are not facilitated with updated smartphones that can help them access the internet and information freely. When they have the credits, they have to face the electricity or the performance of the devices to get access. When the students are in the high motivation to read and to learn, the device might not work properly, they will have their motivation decreased. Therefore, the use of updated and proper smartphone is required to improve the students' accessibility.

The third is the geographical condition that influences the internet connection. A number of students still have to find good places to connect them with the internet. This deals with the infrastructures of the internet connection that suit the geographical condition. It is clear that if the position of the students' houses is not well infrastructure, the students cannot access the internet at their house. They have to find good places to enable them connect to the internet. The students should go to other part of their village, to the higher place that enable them collaborate with other students. This will of course break the rules of social distancing.

The fourth, the students' accessibility on the use of Moca. Actually, there are several problems on the use of Moca. The students cannot directly get involved into the class so they have to find their own classes. This will create another problem for the students if they are not familiar with the Moca and cannot find the correct class, they will enroll themselves in a wrong learning process. Then, Moca is a new system that still needs to be evaluated and revised for its betterment. Sometimes, the system cannot be accessed based on the schedule, the activity cannot be completed on time and the data for the students' task is not properly saved. Thus, the students and the teacher need to be well communicated about the work in Moca.

3.4 Effectiveness

Based on the students' feedback, the use of digital learning during the pandemic is not that effective due to several problems faced. This finding is in accordance to a survey conducted by Adhan & Anwar (2020) that the traditional classroom was more effective than the online classroom. First, the internet connection is not stable so the students cannot clearly catch the teacher's explanation during the zoom meeting. Then, the students also stated that the use of online learning cannot provide more opportunities for the students to communicate directly with the teacher. They feel that online communication cannot give clear explanation about the topic

discussed since whenever they have problems, they cannot ask for the teacher's explanation in time. Next, most of the students conduct the process of online learning at their homes which might be less conducive for them to learn. The situation at home is more for taking break and gather with the other family members. The activity of other members of the family also interrupts the students' learning process. If the students get many interruptions during their learning, they will lose their focus and it will also lower their motivation to achieve the learning goals.

The explanation above shares that the students prefer to have face-to-face class instead of online class. The main factor of this is the students' readiness to have their independent learning. It is clear that the students cannot communicate directly with the teacher about the learning materials. The students also have more opportunities for themselves to communicate with the other members of the classroom when they faced problems. The students realize that the learning situation will stimulate themselves to learn maximally. Learning at busy home will decrease the students' learning concentration and focus. They expect to have offline class at the campus to enable them learn better. This is actually proven that the students' preference include independence, creativity, sociability, risk-taking, stimulus, and sensation seeking [19].

Taken from the students' learning achievement, many of them do not have high learning achievement. The students could not respond to the teacher's questions well which is different from the classroom learning activity. Then, the students are also slow in receiving the information from the teacher due to the internet connection and also the learning situation. The students' completion on their task is also unsatisfying since the students' works submitted in the Moca were not on time. Finally, the students' score of English tests is also not satisfying. The students' means score for the English is around 53.5 that does not belong to satisfying score.

From the six aspects, process is mostly highlighted by the students. They are full conscious that their digital learning requires their independency in achieving the learning goals. The social media application, e-learning website and What's Apps, are also considered by the students as one aspect that influences their learning. The internet access is viewed as one crucial problems of the students' digital learning since most of the students live in rural areas. Based on the students' responses on their learning motivation, the students share that they felt unmotivated and less focus on the online learning. Lastly, the learning is less effective for the students as they have more limitation to the internet connection. However, the students realize that they have to be more active to update themselves in order to keep up with the changes given by the lecturers. Therefore, a number of suggestions and implications are discussed under the topic of digital literacy, positivity.

4 Conclusion

The sudden changes in language teaching during the pandemic creates challenges for both the students and the teacher. The process of language teaching should employ the principles of language teaching and considering the students' perspectives on their online learning. The mastery of technological competence and learning facility and environment are crucial for the success of students' learning. Stimulating the students to work independently, autonomously and enthusiastically will improve the students' learning achievement through meaningful and enjoyable learning process. To deal with the online learning process, the students are highly required to train their critical thinking skills, reflective skills, and autonomous learning skills.

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