

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN E-LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION: LESSON FROM THE PAST, PRINCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE

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Abstract

The Coronavirus that we've been dealing with since December 2019 resulted in unexpected emergency online instruction. Schools and universities were shuttered, face-to-face teaching and learning activities were suspended, and an emergency online teaching policy was implemented. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to identify the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities of EFL lecturers' implementation of E-learning in EFL online classes during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to collect the data. As a result of E-learning implementation, EFL instructors have become more familiar with CALL, according to the study's findings. Considered to be the drawbacks of the E-learning implementation were an unstable internet connection, a lack of direct interaction between lecturers and students, and the inability of EFL teachers to control their students. In addition, EFL instructors were required to oversee, supervise, and direct the entire assessment procedure. On the other side, English online instruction through E-learning generated chances for EFL lecturers, such as supplying more creative media or making their instructional videos.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, EFL Lecturer's challenges, E-learning*

Introduction

We nowadays live in an era of hardship for every single part of life. As the COVID-19 Pandemic runs its course, many countries implement measures that limit the number of people congregating in public places. Schools and universities have been disrupted by such measures. Lecturers and students need to work hard to accomplish education, although it

should be done in remote teaching and learning process. Online learning gives both students and teachers a new set of issues to solve. Cao et al. (2020) say that these things do affect education, especially the growth of students.

Some subjects cannot easily be taught online through some platforms especially a wide range of hands-on skills (Bula & Xu, 2020). It remains for language learning when lecturers and students need to learn and practice the skill directly. The class would be harder if the students cannot show their performances during the learning process, such as speaking, listening, and writing skills. University students strive to keep learning language skills online. The problems worsen when students with access to digital devices and the internet may not be the majority in most places. However, the language teaching and the learning process must be done online regardless of the students' problems.

Concerning this challenging situation, many applications, platforms, and resources for education built to help parents, students, lecturers, and schools were provided by local government such as in many countries as summarized by UNESCO (2021). Furthermore, during school off, these facilities promote students in learning and serve social care and interaction. Most of them are free, easy to access, and constructed to convey multiple languages as well. This is good news for educators. Accordingly, they have to be able to utilize educational technologies for the sake of education itself. In reality, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has been utilized for language teaching and learning for more than four decades, according to Bailey and Lee (2020). English language teaching has evolved significantly due to technological advancements, paving the way for online language study. Thus, online English instruction and distance courses are not novel phenomena, but the transition to emergency online language instruction owing to the pandemic may bring unique challenges for EFL teachers and students.

The switch to global remote instruction spawned the modes of instructional delivery needed to differentiate the terms employed. During the time of the pandemic, the terms "online learning" and "emergency remote teaching" were used interchangeably to describe how teachers and students behaved. Hodges et al., (2020) note, though, that emergency remote teaching is a solution that can be used instead of traditional ways of learning when there is a crisis. They also say that online teaching was something that was planned from the start. Still, it is a short-term change in how education is given that happens suddenly and without warning. Emergency remote teaching is only for a short time because it will be replaced by face-to-face, online, or blended learning once the crisis ends or gets better. Since emergency remote teaching isn't the same as online education, a temporary alternative must be found so that people can get a good education in times of emergency. In other ways, though, it could be seen as pretty much the same. Even though there is an emergency, online instruction or technology may not be necessary for remote teaching. However, according to Moser et al. (2021), the majority of the remote teaching that has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic has been done so via the internet. Throughout this research, the term "emergency online teaching or learning" will refer to any activity that is focused on the delivery of emergency instruction remotely via the internet.

Lecturers and students can gain fruitful benefits from the use of some learning applications as part of educational technologies to take into hand this conflicting situation in English language teaching, which is totally different from students' cultural norms which they must have in distance learning (Rambe & Salminawati, 2019). There have been formerly several studies related to E-learning implementation in English language teaching across the globe, such as in China (Chai, 2012), Ghana (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2014), Thailand (Saeheng, 2017), and Saudi Arabia (Mutambik, 2018). All findings highlight that E-learning plays an

essential function in supporting English language teaching to be more effective, particularly for students in universities.

Furthermore, recent research on the use of E-learning during the covid-19 pandemic has been done by Fitria (2020), Utami (2020), and (Mardiah, 2020). The studies focused on how lecturers deal with the problems faced during online teaching and learning (Mardiah, 2020) and how lecturers and stakeholders provided the solutions. In other research, Fitria (2020) found online learning platforms vary used by 81 EFL lecturers from colleges and universities in Indonesia. The media used indicated how lecturers work hard to make their learning run well although online. Having a deeper study, Utami (2020) explored the lecturers' strategies in English classes through e-learning. The finding revealed that lecturers implemented various strategies for writing and listening skills using a video-based learning model and also virtual education through WhatsApp. However, research on what strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges have been done by EFL lecturers in implementing E-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in their teaching is not found yet.

Many studies have been done on different parts of online teaching and learning English language skills from elementary school to university (for example, Andriivna et al., 2020; Jones, 2020; Maican & Cocoradă, 2021; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Russell, 2020; Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). To put it another way, evidence and experience gleaned from research studies can be used to better understand English language education during emergency online teaching as well as when a sudden change to emergency teaching is likely to happen in the future.

In brief, all studies above prove that E-learning possesses a significant role in fostering learning no except English in the EFL context. There is currently an urgent call to help lecturers get along with their classes during this Covid-19 pandemic. To contribute to this condition,

this study aims to explore lecturers' strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities in implementing E-learning in EFL online classes during the covid-19 pandemic at the State Islamic Institute of Kediri (IAIN Kediri).

Method

The purpose of this study is to examine EFL lecturers' best practices for utilizing digital platforms in higher education to teach English education, general English, and ESP via online learning in the aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak. To accomplish the study's objective, a descriptive qualitative design is used. Researchers can better grasp the conscious involvement of their subjects through qualitative research, which, according to Creswell (2007), uses a wide range of measurement forms and associations to examine a small number of topics or issues. This research was carried out at a higher education institution in Kediri, East Java. A state Islamic institute in Kediri was chosen because it is one of the towns in East Java that attracts students from various districts around to pursue further education. As a result, the teaching experience of lecturers is expected to enrich the data obtained in the current study. Participants in this study included 11 EFL lecturers from four different faculties involved in teaching English education, general English, and the ESP program.

To collect data, participants completed a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. Given that the Covid-19 outbreak remains the primary concern at the moment, the questionnaire was distributed to participants via Google Form. They completed the form and the responses were entered into a spreadsheet, which was then analyzed.

Results and Discussions

Eleven EFL lecturers delivered feedback and comments regarding their strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, and challenges in accommodating E-learning classes in various departments as follows.

Table 1. Feedback and comments from the participants

Participant	Strengths	Weaknesses	Challenges	Opportunities
P1	<i>It can be accessed easily anywhere and anytime. The teaching and learning process can still be done although we have to stay at home. We can study without attending the actual class in the college.</i>	<i>Trouble such as E-learning platform, signal problem, lousy internet connection, take much money for transferable credit.</i>	<i>As educators, we need to be creative about how to deliver our teaching effectively through online devices</i>	<i>It's a good chance for us to concern for our health for the sake of all. online learning gives all educators and students to be flexible in life as we can study and explore ourselves better through other activities such as doing our hobbies and other potential activities.</i>
P2	<i>We use more platforms in the teaching-learning process</i>	<i>Sometimes, it is hard to access the platform because of the signal.</i>	<i>We should be ready to answer the students' questions 24/7</i>	<i>I also give my students some videos from YouTube to support their study</i>
P3	<i>We can get the class by any chance and situation. It is simple and doable. The lectures and students can get to the class from home, and do not need to go out.</i>	<i>Hard to control.</i>	<i>Synchronization and transferring knowledge</i>	<i>Every single day by using the most appropriate platform, e-learning, WhatsApp, or Google meet</i>
P4	<i>Easy to reach the distance students to deliver the learning material</i>	<i>Limited internet access, less interaction between teacher and student, not understanding</i>	<i>We have to learn and understand IT.</i>	<i>Finally, I learn to make a video explanation and share it on YouTube.</i>

		<i>the material, and lack of supervision in the teaching-learning process.</i>		
P5	<i>Students can be more creative and learn from many more sources, especially on the Internet. This is because they have to do their lecture tasks with limited communication with their teacher.</i>	<i>Internet connection problem, sometimes the students are not focused on the lecturer's explanation, and we cannot control them</i>	<i>Virtual lecture means media used is the top tool needed. Without good and correct media, the teaching-learning process can be ineffective and vain. Good the Internet connection is the other requirement. Without the Internet, the class dies.</i>	<i>The teacher has to increase her skill in information technology and learn more strategies and approaches in teaching implementation so that the students can learn to the maximum. The better IT skill, the better media chosen. The better strategies and approaches implemented, the better teaching and learning.</i>
P6	<i>Easily accessed only by using a smartphone connected to the Internet, affordable cost, flexible learning time, broad knowledge as we can know digital media in the teaching-learning process.</i>	<i>lack of "kuota internet", bad signal for remote area, face to face gap that sometimes cannot be replaced with online teaching even though through the live conference</i>	<i>Slow internet access, expensive internet quota, not having laptop or smartphone, many disturbances at home, less capable in technology, not interactive teaching learning process, many students were not serious in teaching learning process.</i>	<i>Cooperation between teachers, students and parents to get creative solution and to use new device in teaching learning process such as using google meet, google classroom, e learning, etc. We must be eager to get new knowledge from others.</i>
P7	<i>In this pandemic situation, E-</i>	<i>We cannot control them directly!</i>	<i>The lecturer is challenged to be more</i>	<i>E-learning can become a good innovation of</i>

	<p><i>learning allows students to participate in the class anytime and anywhere. The learning process tends to become more student-centered because the lecturer has a role as a facilitator. The students can access the material easier from many online references/resources.</i></p>		<p><i>creative in teaching and be able to apply the newest technology in e-learning. The students need to be more responsible, independent and active in their learning.</i></p>	<p><i>education. Both lecturers and students can explore many online platforms that support learning process.</i></p>
P8	<p><i>Practical.</i></p>	<p><i>It is hard to approach our students in this situation, obviously in terms of academic matters. It is hard to make them understand and get our points. Some limited resources and varied circumstances of our students also contribute to this. Unfortunately, we depend a lot on the stability of the network in conducting the class. I also need more time to prepare the material and thinking harder about how to</i></p>	<p><i>hard to control</i></p>	<p><i>Practical</i></p>

		<i>deliver the lesson. It is like there is a much longer preparation in teaching</i>		
P9	<i>Development of Digital Pedagogy: engaging in new digital technology makes the teaching and learning process more fun, attractive, effective, and efficient. For example, assessing students' understanding of English grammar through quizzes or goggle forms can be done more quickly.</i>	<i>It's difficult to ensure the students honesty while doing the quiz or test. Sometimes the students get some connection problems (signal/mobile data) so they cannot access the online class/material. Sometimes the lectures can be boring when compared to face-to-face. The students are lack of having interaction with the lecturer and their friends.</i>	<i>Issues with assessment: conducting authentic assessment with valid scores is very challenging in assessing students' competence. The ability of a Lecturer to manage, control, and supervise the whole proses of assessment is limited. As a result, the lecturer sometimes gets difficulties to decide whether the students' works are "purely" done by themselves or not.</i>	<i>Incorporation of blended learning in future curriculum development: Diminished resources including curricula time, budgets, and staffs, in conjunction with increased student numbers, innovative and novel approaches are needed to solve these pressing issues. One of the approaches is blended learning which also incorporates online learning tools, whether it is in class or at home, that can offer more effective and personalized learning experiences for students and lecturers. It also offers opportunity to develop resources that can be used in the upcoming academic year, allowing them to incorporate more blended learning techniques and</i>

				<i>review the curriculum</i>
P10	<i>It brings me to care more about my students and the way I teach them. Lately, I have been kind of studying hard to advancing myself in technology. I was trying hard to look for suitable platforms or media, which could help me teach my class. I have also become much more considerate. I take my students' circumstances into account much more than before</i>	<i>The teacher cannot control what students do during the learning process in lecture times. Some of the students turn their cameras off during the lectures on google meetings and not be active in discussion on WA Group</i>	<i>more less the same with the weaknesses</i>	<i>Somehow, I become creative in doing my job, because I learn how to incorporate games or other fun media in teaching my class so that my students can engage more without feeling bored. I also become much aware of technology and other online teaching media</i>
P11	<i>We have various types of teaching models in online learning, so it can make it easy to share the explanation of the lesson.</i>	<i>Lack of practical sessions: online learning makes direct interaction between lecturer to students or students to students significantly decreased. This condition affects the opportunity of students to practice their English skills, especially speaking.</i>	<i>Student's participation (we need to be more creative)</i>	<i>We are not only use one platform but also various platforms. It can make us easy to control, monitor, evaluate and measure student's activeness in class</i>

The transition to online or emergency distance learning has influenced English education in several ways. In spite of the fact that the pandemic had a discernible impact on English education programs, pedagogy, and evaluation, one of the primary objectives of this approach was to maintain a high level of quality in language teaching. More specifically, the findings indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities to language teachers participating in emergency online teaching, which is a form of online instruction in which teachers make use of online teaching platforms and applications. In terms of the strengths of online teaching as seen in Table 1, one of the advantages of teaching English through an online platform is the incorporation of new forms of technology and digital resources. This has helped students during the pandemic to access more materials for knowledge sources from the internet (Krish, 2008) as stated by Participant 5 in the finding. For lecturers, the online English teaching experience stimulates them to use more attractive activities for students and have flexible schedules since the teaching and learning process can be done anywhere (Anderson, 2008) as reinforced by some participants' statements in Table 1.

On the other hand, as the results show, online emergency English teaching is also associated with certain weaknesses. All educational stakeholders, including language teachers, students, and their families, have been put in a tough spot by the sudden and unplanned switch to distance learning during an emergency. Online teaching requires a stable internet connection, an effective online platform, a learning management system, and access to smartphones and computers, all of which have been reported to be lacking, making it harder to teach English efficiently during the pandemonium. During the pandemic, some of the weakest parts of E-learning were an unstable internet connection (Anwar & Wahid, 2021), the lack of control lecturers had over online teaching

through platforms, the use of fewer and less interesting teaching activities, and the lack of direct interaction during courses (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020) as witnessed by many participants in the finding.

Regarding the obstacles to using E-learning in online education during this period, lecturers were required to be inventive in delivering instructional materials via online devices utilizing various E-learning platforms which they consider challenges. In this instance, they required media in the online teaching and learning process in order to have an effective online course. In addition, it was difficult for EFL lecturers to respond to students' questions outside of the classroom. In addition, delivering real assessments with valid ratings was extremely difficult when assessing the ability of students. This is in line with the study of Yulianto and Mujtahin (2021). It is difficult for EFL lecturers to manage, supervise, and control the entire assessment process. As a result, the lecturer sometimes has difficulty determining whether the students' works are "exclusively" their own or not as stated by one of the participants in this study.

As evidenced by the findings, online teaching and learning of English offer a variety of advantages despite its challenges and difficulties. The switch to online English instruction has inspired both lecturers and students to investigate numerous E-learning platforms. It assisted EFL lecturers in controlling, monitoring, evaluating, and measuring student participation in online English classes. In addition, they become inventive, such as by creating a video explanation and uploading it to YouTube as reinforced by Hakim et al. (2022), and by adding games and other entertaining media into online English instruction so that students are not bored as stated by participants in this study written in Table 1. In addition to these advantages, the change to online English instruction as a result of the epidemic has boosted the lecturers' expertise and knowledge of digital literacy as a 21st-century

talent. Another benefit of integrating E-learning in online English instruction is the possibility to create resources that may be utilized in the future academic year, particularly in an EFL blended learning environment.

As evidenced by these eleven feedback and comments, Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a sudden switch to emergency online teaching. This changed how teaching was done (Moser et al., 2021). The switch to online teaching or emergency distance teaching had many effects on the way English was taught. The results showed that neither the teachers nor the students were ready, and the sudden, unplanned switch to remote teaching changed the way English language courses were taught and learned (Andriivna et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2021). More specifically, the results showed that the Covid-19 pandemic gave language teachers and students strengths, weaknesses, and chances (Hadianti & Arisandi, 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Karakuzu et al., 2020; Moser et al., 2021; Situmorang et al., 2020). In this pandemic situation, teachers used online teaching platforms and apps to teach, and both teachers and students need to know how to use technology to use learning management systems. In this way, one of the best things about online teaching is that digital and technological tools are already used to teach English (Turchi et al., 2020).

During the pandemic, EFL lecturers and students who have been using CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) for a long time were a big help (Huang et al., 202; Bailey & Lee, 2020). Lecturers who had taught English online before used more interesting activities for the students and served as role models for both their students and their colleagues (Bailey & Lee, 2020).

Aside from these benefits, one of the biggest problems with online teaching during the pandemic was that teachers and students didn't know enough about it. Other problems included teachers not being able to control

online teaching platforms, less interesting and varied teaching activities, and a lack of direct interaction during classes (Bailey & Lee, 2020; Huang et al., 2021; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2020; Shaaban, 2020). Another important finding about the problems with online teaching is that lecturers aren't ready for it because they don't know much about or have experience with online learning. They think that online teaching is just face-to-face teaching in an online setting, which makes it frustrating and less effective (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Another thing that was talked about was how to keep the quality of language education high despite the effects of the pandemic on English language teaching programs, teaching methods, and testing (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020).

Even though there are some problems and challenges with online English teaching, the findings show that there are also some good things about it. The switch to teaching English online gave students a way to practice English on their own through supplementary media. By taking part in online English learning through different E-learning platforms, students are still mostly exposed to language learning (Hadiani & Arisandi, 2020).

Conclusion

With regard to the findings of this study, the strength of E-learning implementation is that EFL lecturers become more familiar with CALL. This stimulates them to use more attractive activities through some E-learning platforms to teach their students during online English teaching and learning. The sudden and unplanned transition to emergency distance teaching because of the Covid-19 pandemic causes some big issues i.e., unstable internet connection, lack of direct interaction between lecturers and students, and lack of EFL lecturers' ability in controlling their students as the weaknesses of E-learning implementation. Furthermore, EFL lecturers are challenged to manage, supervise, and control the entire assessment process. On the other hand,

English online teaching through E-learning also creates some opportunities for EFL lecturers to be more creative such as providing suitable media or creating their own instructional videos. In short, future research can focus more on E-learning implementation in an EFL blended learning environment using the newest platforms.

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