English Language Teaching Online Class during Covid-19 Era

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran *online* menjadi bentuk peralihan sistem pendidikan di era pandemi Covid-19. Hal ini diupayakan sebagai wujud keberlanjutan pendidikan dengan memanfaatkan aplikasi *zoom, WhatsApp (WA), google form,* dan *google meet.* Penelitian ini berupaya mendeskripsikan kegiatan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan yang menerapkan sistem belajar daring via *WhatsApp.* Proses pengumpulan data dilakukan secara sistematis menggunakan teknik wawancara (juga via *online* melalui *google form*). Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran sistem daring dipandang tepat sebagai alternatif menjaga keberlanjutan proses pendidikan di era Covid-19, termasuk yang dipraktikkan oleh penyelenggara pendidikan di SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan. Adapun alasan pengggunaan aplikasi *WhatsApp* didasarkan ada familiarnya aplikasi tersebut di kalangan guru, siswa, maupun wali siswa. Proses kegiatan belajar, penugasan, dan penilaian pembelajaran dilaksanakan secara virtual oleh pendidik selama pandemi Covid-19. Begitupun, diperoleh kelemahan siste pembelajaran daring, yakni sinyal internet yang sering lemah sehingga lambat mengakses laman pencarian di *google* dan fasilitas pembelajaran siswa yang masih terbatas.

Kata Kunci: Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris, Covid-19, Aplikasi Smartphone.

Abstract

Online learning is a transitional form of the education system in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. This is attempted as a form of continuing education by utilizing the Zoom, WhatsApp (WA), Google Form, and Google Meet applications. This study attempts to describe English learning activities at SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan which implements an online learning system via WhatsApp. The data collection process was carried out systematically using interview techniques (also online via google form). The results of this study indicate that online learning systems are considered appropriate as an alternative to maintaining the sustainability of the educational process in the Covid-19 era, including those practiced by education providers at SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan. The reason for using the WhatsApp application is based on the familiarity of the application among teachers, students, and student guardians. The process of learning activities, assignments, and learning assessments are carried out virtually by educators during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, the weaknesses of the online learning system are obtained, namely, the internet signal is often weak so that it is slow to access search pages on google and student learning facilities are still limited.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Covid-19, Smartphone Application.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the hope of all Indonesian people. This is based on the importance of education as an individual provision in navigating life. In addition, through a quality education process, a superior generation (human resources) will be born (Patilima, 2022; Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2012: 141-176). In line with this, the government has issued a policy in the form of a national education system as the basis (principle) for the nation's human resources to seek to improve their quality, and are assisted by education providers in facilitating the best education for the community, the aim is to create a solutive society in addressing the existing problems (Usman, 2014: 13-31). In this context, it takes a set of appropriate methods, techniques, approaches, and strategies for the child's learning process, known as the educational curriculum.

The Covid-19 pandemic has become a contemporary problem in the world of education, as well as all sectors of human life. This is because all access to human interaction must be limited to break the "chain" of the spread of the virus, which is thought to be very dangerous and lead to death. This is also the basic reason for the transfer of all learning activities through virtual (online). The term work from home (WFH) is also known to employees and education personnel (Zendrato, 2020: 242; Duan & Zhu, 2020: 300-302).

Supporting these efforts, the government through the ministry of education and culture has officially established an online learning policy in the Covid-19 pandemic situation (Permendikbud number 4 of 2020). In this regulation, the principles and limitations of the online learning system are regulated in such a way that they are carried out from their respective homes. These efforts must be balanced with improving the quality of educators in using virtual methods and other learning tools (Sajow, 2022; Hikmat, *et.al.,* 2020).

The application of online learning is considered appropriate as an alternative to the learning process in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, there are still various weaknesses, especially in terms of using the application for teachers who are accustomed to offline learning systems (face to face). For this reason, Rapih & Sutaryadi (2018: 78-87) explain that teachers are given the freedom to create the learning process, but the indicators and learning orientations are increasing students' thinking skills, from Lower Order Thinking Skill (LOTS) to Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). In line with this, Saragih & Nasution (2021: 40-47) revealed that higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) will encourage students to reason broadly on any material taught by the teacher.

In practice, teachers are required to be able to use technology actively. As is the case with the teachers at SMP-IT Ad Durrah, the teacher deliberately uses WhatsApp as a learning medium, because it is familiar and easy to use by all people. The learning system via WhatsApp also facilitates learning interactions from each other's homes. Not only that, various forms of documents, photos, and videos for assignments to students can also be sent via WhatsApp (Marbun & Sinaga, 2021: 3299-3305).

Even though the online learning system has various weaknesses in the implementation process, it provides a lot of convenience by learning from each other's homes (without being bound by learning space and time). This is of course supported by the very rapid sophistication of technology and information, as well as fast internet service facilities so that learning continues to be carried out properly without worrying about the spread of the Covid-19 virus (Baety & Munandar, 2021: 880-989; Pradipta, *et.al.,* 2021: 144-148).

Learning the online system is the main answer to continuing education in the emergency period of the Covid-19 outbreak. In this context, educators are required to be able to facilitate student learning optimally (Oktaviani, *et.al.*, 2021: 77-88). Then, students are also expected to increase the time and quality of learning, so that later they can overcome various life problems and student learning tasks.

Online learning has the main goal as a form of optimizing various decisions that students make in equipping themselves independently online. The form of debriefing in question includes the search for additional information and strengthening self-competence automatically related to skills or soft skills. Of course, this effort helps students in treading technological sophistication through the learning process, so that the quality

of reasoning and appreciation of students can also increase. Furthermore, the most distinctive characteristic of online learning is the ease of setting a study schedule, where teachers and students have flexible time to carry out learning activities (Sartika, 2021: 49-54; Winarsieh & Rizqiyah, 2020: 159-164).

The current digital era, with its various sophistications, is faced with an emergency in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic. Even so, education as the front line in the human resource empowerment sector must continue to run. For this reason, the application of online learning is considered appropriate as an alternative to learning, through the use of the internet network (Uyun & Warsah, 2022: 395-412; Sabin, *et.al.,* 2020: 1-12). In this way, learning will continue, and limited access and interaction during the pandemic will also be maintained.

Online learning or also known as distance learning (PJJ) during the Covid-19 pandemic situation presents significant technological benefits for the learning process (education world). The entire learning process can be carried out well through various application features that are very helpful. Furthermore, Indonesia as a nation that prioritizes education in the state constitution seeks to educate the nation's life, of course fully supporting the sustainability of education. This is done to avoid the occurrence of a lost generation. The application features that are very helpful in the learning process are e-learning, WhatsApp, google classroom, zoom, and Youtube (Wilson, 2020; Novita & Hutasuhut, 2020: 1-11).

Based on the initial (preliminary) study in this study, the researcher distributed the google form link to all educators at SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan to obtain information related to the use of online learning applications. As a result, it is known that educators are very familiar with WhatsApp, so this application is the most popular in the learning process, including zoom, google form, and so on. In fact, through voice notes, systematic ways of listening to students' voices were also obtained.

From the information above, the author also obtained information about what learning methods are suitable for carrying out online learning during the current pandemic. Furthermore, information was also obtained about the total number of how many obstacles experienced by teachers and students, what material was delivered, how the student learning outcomes were, and how many times the teacher met students doing online learning when online learning methods were applied using online applications. Furthermore, this research is summarized in the title, "*English Language Teaching Online Class during Covid-19 Era*".

METHOD

This research is qualitative research (approach) with a descriptive study method. The background of this research is at the Integrated Islamic Middle School Ad-Durrah Medan. The data collection process is carried out in a way, the researcher spreads a number of questions in the google form link, then the teachers fill in the answers in the form (Assingkily, 2021). Then, the researchers obtained information from the answers that had been filled in by the teachers regarding online learning (English teaching) at SMP IT Ad Durrah Medan. The number of research respondents, namely a total of 31 teachers. The questions that the researchers asked included the procedures or procedures for implementing online learning, the methods applied, the applications used, and the obstacles experienced by teachers during the online learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the Minister of Education and Culture Number 3 of 2020 regarding steps to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, education in Indonesia is shifted to online or online learning to stay safe at home. Online learning from home implemented by SMPIT Ad-Durrah Medan utilizes various online applications that are available so that the learning process runs optimally. This writing aims to evaluate the online teaching and learning process at SMPIT Ad-Durrah Medan and to find out what information technology in the form of online applications is used.
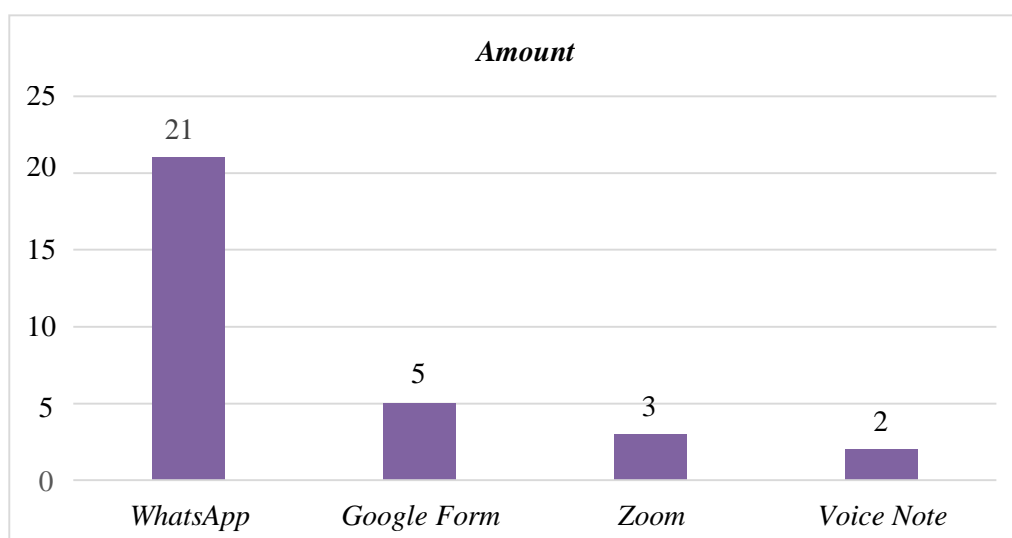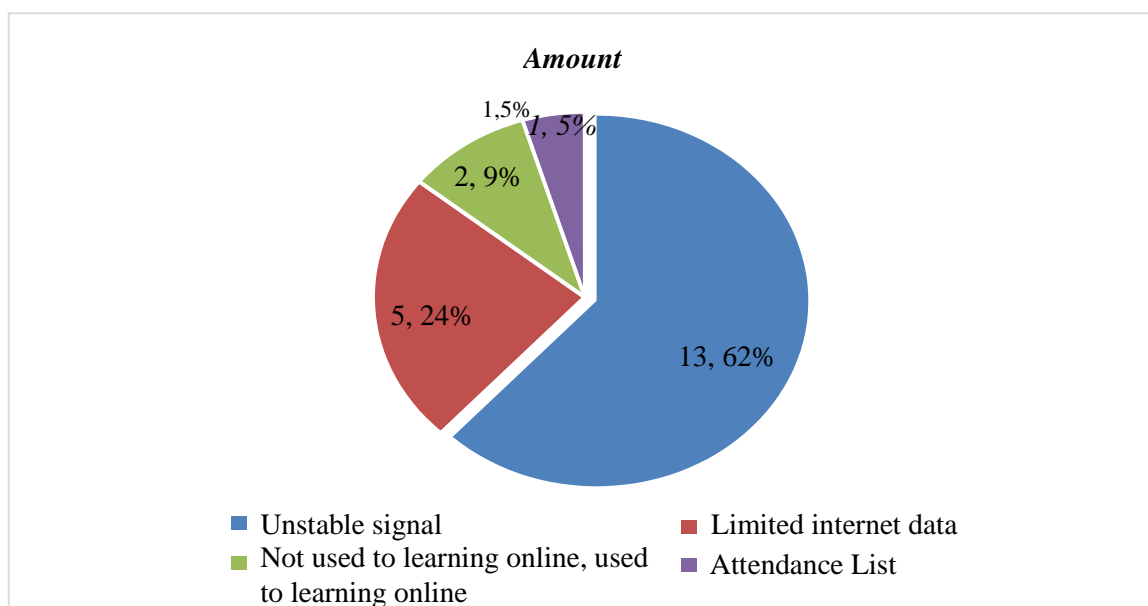
Picture 1. Online applications used for online learning

From the results of the data obtained by the researcher, all 31 teachers implemented online learning using online applications during the Covid-19 pandemic. Picture (1) shows an online application that is used for online learning, based on data as many as 21 teachers use the WhatsApp application to do online learning, but the 21 teachers also use other applications to further support learning activities to be more leverage, 5 teachers use Google Form application, 3 teachers use the Zoom application, and 2 teachers use Voice Note. This is because the WhatsApp application is owned by both teachers and students on their respective mobile phones, making it easier for teachers to convey materials and assignments to students by sending them to the WhatsApp Group.

Based on Picture 1 shows that in addition to using the WhatsApp application, as many as 5 teachers used the Google Form application, which is an application owned by Google and is easy to access. Used for the evaluation process of students after receiving material online by their respective subject teachers by sending a questionnaire containing assignments, then students are instructed to complete the task by providing answers in the column provided in the questionnaire. In one subject, several platforms can be used to deliver learning materials. The use of the platform is the right alternative to facilitate the online learning process.

Google Form has the advantage of being used as a medium for online learning, including having various types of tests that can be used, such as multiple-choice, checklists, or long-answer tests. This application also has an attractive appearance with many templates so that it can be more colorful, and also has facilities for users to add images or photos. In the teaching and learning process using this application students can send responses or answers quickly and wherever they are (Parinata & Puspaningtyas, 2021: 56-65).

Picture 1 also shows data that as many as 2 teachers at SMPIT Ad-Durrah Medanuse Voice Note in online learning. It is used in Tahfidz subjects so that teachers can apply the Talaqi method to listen to students' memorizing deposits of the Qur'an, also used in English subjects so that students can send voice recordings in the form of assignments when reading the English text, whether it is correct or not.

Picture 2. Problems faced during online learning
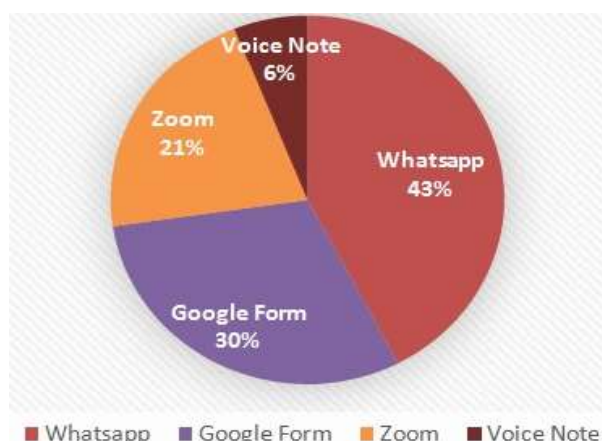
Picture 3. Online applications used for online learning

From the data above, it can be seen that the problem that many faces are the less stable signal during online learning. Most of the teachers, as many as 62% stated that students could not take online learning or collect assignments that had been given on time due to unstable signals, sometimes there was no signal at all. Not only that but doing Work From Home by implementing online learning also requires an adequate data package, as many as 24% of teachers complain about it. In fact, especially students, often run out of internet data packages due to economic factors during the current pandemic. All applications used for online learning cost a lot of internet quota, especially for the use of the Zoom application in the form of Video Conferences. And as many as 5% of teachers complained about student absenteeism or their presence in online learning due to some of the problems mentioned above. This makes it difficult for both teachers and students to deliver and receive learning materials.

The application of online learning methods was carried out suddenly along with the Corona Virus, it caused both students and teachers not to be used to and fully prepare themselves to carry out online learning activities. As many as 9% of teachers stated that students and teachers themselves were not used to doing online learning especially using the *Zoom Video application*. This habit problem is one of the success factors in learning, if teachers and students are accustomed to using the application, then the basic factors for implementing online learning have been fulfilled and support the success of online learning activities (Mian,

2011: 1068-1075). To deal with this problem, finally, teachers at SMPIT Ad-Durrah Medan use the *WhatsApp* application more so that online learning activities can still be carried out properly.

Efforts are made to overcome various obstacles that arise when online learning is carried out so that learning activities can run optimally. Based on the data obtained by the researcher, when there are obstacles to students in the form of unstable signals, limited internet data packages, or students who are not accustomed to operating online applications, causing difficulties in participating in online learning which affects student attendance, the teacher at SMPIT Ad-Durrah Medan does repeated learning, instructing students who have been able to follow online to redistribute the material obtained to other friends, also allowing students to work in groups of 2 to 3 students on one device while still adhering to health protocols.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the results and discussion of the research above, it is concluded that online learning systems are considered appropriate as an alternative to maintaining the sustainability of the educational process in the Covid-19 era, including those practiced by education providers at SMP IT Ad-Durrah Medan. The reason for using the WhatsApp application is based on the familiarity of the application among teachers, students, and student guardians. The process of learning activities, assignments, and learning assessments are carried out virtually by educators during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, the weaknesses of the online learning system are obtained, namely, the internet signal is often weak so that it is slow to access search pages on google and student learning facilities are still limited.

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