
ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING (OLL) DURING PANDEMIC SHOULD BE EVALUATED, WHY NOT?

Aries Utomo, M.Pd.

English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University
Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

E-Mail: aries.utomo91@fib.unmul.ac.id

A. Introduction

As we know, COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia still has been running since early March 2020. At this time, it has raised more than one million confirmed cases and also gives huge effects to all fields including Education. In responding the situation, Indonesian Government through Minister of Education and Culture chose and announced to hold long distance learning at home as a temporal alternative way in order to prevent COVID-19 spreading through schools or colleges (an official letter of General Secretary of Minister of Education and Culture number 15 year 2020 about guidance of learning from home during the pandemic), so online learning is chosen as one of alternative ways during this pandemic.

What is online learning? if it is viewed from definition, online learning is defined as a distance learning by using technology, such as email, chat, audio and video conferencing (Nguyen, 2015; Dhull & Saksh, 2017). Escobar & Kraub (2017:128) also write that online learning proves to be a flexible way in order to build and expand language knowledge alongside other work and/or study commitments whilst at the same time encouraging autonomous learning, time management, self-motivation and other skills important in boosting employability.

Unfortunately, there are many problems found faced during online learning in Indonesia, especially Online Language Learning or known as OLL where a learner should learn language on four skills, namely: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. I conducted a preliminary study from literature study accessed from website and news, one teacher, and two students in Samarinda found that those problems relate to (1) teacher and students' readiness to conduct OLL, (2) facility support like mobile phone or laptop, (3) internet connection, and etc. Therefore, it should be discussed in order to gain a solution whether OLL should be evaluated or not. Actually, we have no idea when this pandemic ends fully, but we always have to be ready in facing other worst situations, so learning process can be conducted. Although, it is just conducted virtually.

In order to discuss it, there are some questions to be discussed, namely: a) how does effect of OLL during this pandemic? b) Should OLL be evaluated in teaching language learning during this pandemic?

B. Discussion

A. How Does Effect of OLL during this pandemic?

Talking about effect of OLL during this pandemic, it surely has positive and negative effect in conducting it. Tanjung & Utomo (2021:110) in their research reveal that positive effects of online learning, such as: (1) already familiar about online learning, (2) getting empowered in developing digital literacy, and (3) be able to expand students' knowledge by using particular application. In contrast, negative effect of online learning, such as: (1) difficulties in optimizing students' participation, (2) the need of feedback in learning process, and (3) inconsistency of schedule learning online and assignment submission. Escobar & Kraub (2017:128) in their research mention several key areas which have impact of online language learning, namely: professional awareness, improved self-confidence, presentation skill, improved language/communication skills in L1, more autonomy, time management skills, and taking positive actions/extra-curricular engagement.

Talking about its effectiveness, Nguyen (2015) finds that there is a significant positive effect of student's outcomes in learning online than traditional. It is proven from test score and students' engagement in learning. Talking about relationships between the use of OLLS (Online Language Learning Strategies), there is a significant correlation at low level between OLLS of use, affection in online learning's level of agreement, and online English learning outcomes (Kuama and Intharaksa, 2016).

By seeing the enthusiasm of engagement of young people in social networking today, it proves that language students are comfortable connecting digitally with members of the target language, which would enhance their digital communicative competence at the very last (Blake, 2011:30). In addition, through online learning, it also bears opportunities of active learning (Dolence & Norris in Kuama & Intharaks, 2016:54).

Therefore, it can be said that effect of OLL actually give positive effects to learn, but it still has negative effects, especially for language teachers or learners who are getting problems in using technology. It becomes difficult to develop language learning process. They tend to employ traditional process which give easy practice. It must become a note for the authority in correcting it.

B. Should OLL be evaluated during this pandemic?

Relating to evaluation, I think it should be evaluated in order to make learning process can be better than previous one. We aware that learning process on the previous semester virtually was not fully completed and satisfied, because it was the first time for conducting learning process virtually. Of course, there are many problems and less preparations faced by teacher and students. Mulyah et al. (2020:392) on their research reveals that the autonomy of student learning is weak and cannot be instant. They still need guidance like face meeting. In addition, it should plan some programs to train teachers and pupils how to operate internet and computers as well as their information about multimedia which can be used for language learning (Mohammadi et al., 2011:467).

Kuama & Intharaksa (2016:74) also suggest that design and content of online course must be evaluated and revised continuously. In addition, adaptation and creative by teachers are needed in order to give course materials and assessing students (Tanjung & Utomo, 2021).

Therefore, it can be said that evaluation in OLL needs to evaluate, so it can be better and more comprehensive than previous. It includes teacher's role, method, materials, assessment, and application use in order to create a good learning process.

C. Closing

From those discussions, there are two points which can be gained to answer questions on the introduction, as follows:

1. Effects of OLL during this pandemic can be said that it does not only give positive effects, but also negative effects. In my point of view, actually, OLL is a solution when there is a problem in learning face to face, such as learning process in this pandemic. Online learning is an excellent option when there are limitations to traditional learning (Dhull & Sakshi, 2017). We cannot deny the development of online learning, especially for learning language, it has to be accepted. Gallagher & La-Brie in Sun and Chen (2016:171) explain that online education becomes mainstream and a growing market to learn for all people. From those development, it creates an interactive language class. In order to respond it, a teacher should be more creative in preparing materials, so students are not bored to learn. We can learn and discuss through language teacher's forum if it is not enough to create materials by ourselves. It can be very helpful.
2. Evaluation of OLL during this pandemic should strongly conducted by teachers and other authorities in this field. It aims to make OLL can be better than previous, such as: (1) teacher and students' readiness, (2) materials used, (3) assessment, (4) supporting facility likes laptop or internet connection, and (5) training of using OLL media. We aware that there is no any perfect learning process and are still many problems found in doing it, especially OLL. At least, we know what our learning problems are and how to solve and evaluate them. We can employ teacher's forum, students' feedback, and other authorities. in order to realize it, because evaluation is not a one-time event, but an exercise involving assessments of differing scope and depth carried out at several points in time in response to evolving need for evaluative knowledge and learning during the effort to achieve an outcome (The United Nations Development Programme in Mertens, 2010:51).

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Biography:



Aries Utomo, S.Pd., M.Pd. was born in Tarakan, May 18th, 1991. He graduated Bachelor Degree in English Education Program, FKIP, Borneo University Tarakan (2009-2013) and Master Degree in English Education Program, Graduate School, Sebelas Maret University (2013-2015). Since 2019, he works at English Literature Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Mulawarman University. Here are several other activities, namely: (1) Publishing research articles in National Journals, namely: (a) The Use of Instagram to Improve English Literature Students' Self-Confidence In Mastering Speaking Skill (2020), (b) Investigating Lexical Diversity of Children Narratives: A Case Study of L1 Speaking (2020), and (c) Investigating

EFL Students' Perception on Online Learning Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic (2021), (2) writing opinions in National news, such as Kaltim Post, (3) reviewer of national journal, such as: *Jurnal Penelitian Humaniora UMS*, and (4) editorial team of Indonesian Journal of Instructional Media and Model (IJIMM). He can be contacted via email: aries.utomo91@fib.unmul.ac.id or Phone number/WA 0852470823459.