



THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LEARNING MEDIA IN DISTANCE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC

Lina Septianasari^{1*}, Anne Nurlatifah²

¹STKIP Muhammadiyah Bogor

*linaseptiana27@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Digital learning media become the most important tools in distance learning since they can bridge the interaction between the teachers and the students due to their distance. The aim of this paper is to determine the role of digital learning media in distance learning. This study used a descriptive qualitative method to dig the finding by using observation and interview as the instruments. The results showed that teachers' creativity was needed in operating the learning media during the teaching and learning process to manage their fun English classes. Nonetheless, Teachers also need to be more selective in using the learning media to deliver the material and to assess students' learning outcomes.

Keywords: Learning media, Online teaching, Pandemic

Introduction

The outbreak of coronavirus affects many sectors, including education. The process of teaching and learning activities that previously could be held in classrooms by having face-to-face meetings has to be replaced with the distance learning during the outbreak. The distance learning itself actually has been developed long before the COVID-19 pandemic hit around the globe, but during this pandemic its development is quite massive. Currently the distance learning method was carried out as an effort to respond to a circular from the Ministry of Education and Culture to make learning from home more flexible by using social media and a number of online learning applications. There are many accessible learning applications that support distance learning, including the Ruang Guru, Rumah Belajar, Quipper, Edmodo, Zenius, etc. Several local TV and educational radios also provide learning broadcasts at certain agreed hours in each region, namely TVRI, TV Edukasi, RRI Radio, and Suara Edukasi AM 1440 KHz. In addition, the government also provides distance learning facilitation in the form of providing free internet packages for teachers and students and relaxing the use of

School Operational Fees (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation 19/2020) for schools.

The support given from the government and stakeholders does not mean that challenge and problem will never exist during distance learning. To minimize these phenomena, the teachers should prepare the learning media used in the class as one of many preventive acts the teachers can do. Both teachers and students should be adaptive towards the shift from face-to-face learning to online learning, especially in using learning media to study. This is because our education pattern is not used to non-face-to-face learning. In addition, the learning process so far has not focused on the use of technology as a supporting medium. The availability of supporting infrastructure is also inadequate, such as hardware, learning materials, internet connection, and other supporting materials. According to Anas (2020), most teachers are still used to the old way of learning that is human-centered as a source of learning, therefore distance learning produces students who are less interactive and collaborative, poor communication and use of technology, as well as fading enthusiasm for lifelong learning on students.

Arifa (2020) stated that the obstacles commonly found in distance learning were related to the readiness of human resources, the lack of clear directions from local governments, the absence of an appropriate curriculum, and limited facilities and infrastructure, especially technology support and internet networks. The readiness of human resources including educators (teachers and lecturers), students, and parental support is the most important part in the success of distance learning.

Apart from the various challenges mentioned earlier, the implementation of distance learning also has opportunities that can be addressed with the necessity of technology as the bridge of learning habits from face-to-face learning to distance learning. The use of technology as a learning media is a realization of the development of the digital era 4.0 in education.

There are several studies that examined the role of learning media and technology in distance learning. Haddad et al. (2014) argued that technology becomes fundamental learning media in distance learning due to its efficiency. In line with the previous argument, Islam & Hasan (2016) argued that internet and technologies may help to manage student-centered learning. Manurung et al. (2021) also conducted research to find out the use of technology as learning media in online teaching and learning. They found out that some platforms, such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet and others are very beneficial to be used in a distant classroom. On the other hand, Sukanto (2020) observed how e-learning media may become the solution in online learning during a pandemic. The results showed that good use of e-learning media can certainly maximize learning outcomes.

Learning is an activity undertaken with the aim of gaining knowledge, mastering certain competencies and shaping student attitudes. To support the learning process, learning media is needed. Miarso (2009) said that learning media can be interpreted as all things that can be used to convey messages that can stimulate students' feelings, thoughts, desires, and attention and encourage the learning process. Furthermore, Munadi (2008) stated that learning media can be understood as everything that can deliver and channel messages from sources in a planned manner so as to create a conducive learning environment from which the

recipient can do the learning process efficiently and effectively. According to Musfiqon (2012), learning media is a tool in the form of physical and non-physical use by teachers in delivering material to students to be more effective and efficient.

Based on the above description, the authors are interested in conducting a similar study that specifically discusses the role of learning media in distance learning during the pandemic. The aim of this research is to find out the role of online learning media during distance learning. Specifically, it observes how the learning media were managed in the English classroom.

Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. According to Wirartha (2006), a descriptive qualitative method is aimed to analyze, describe, and summarize various conditions, situations from various data collected in the form of interviews or observations about the problems studied that occur in the field. Research samples were chosen by using purposive sampling. In collecting the data, we joined to the English classes to observe how the samples or English teachers managed to use learning media to deliver the material or to give assessment to the students. Other than that, we also did an interview on the samples to get more findings. After data were collected, we analyzed the data and described the findings qualitatively.

Discussion

Learning media is one of the methods or tools used in the teaching and learning process. Attractive and creative learning media are needed for teachers to be able to make their students more enthusiastic in learning, especially while studying from home like the current situation. It is used to stimulate learning patterns in order to support the success of the teaching and learning process with the result that teaching and learning activities can be effective in achieving learning objectives. There are many kinds of learning media that can be used. Especially now that it has entered the 4.0 era, the role of technology has entered various aspects, including the world of education.

The results taken from observation showed that the research samples combined some types of learning media to manage their classes. They used audio media, visual media, and also audio-visual media. They combined various platforms to help them manage the classes. Some media that they use are WhatsApp, Zoom, Quizziz, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and Padlet. As teaching English deals with four different skills, these media were combined and used in line with the type of skills they wanted to focus on.

Google Meet and Zoom were two most common media the teachers used to deliver the materials. On particular occasions they also used WhatsApp for written discussion with the students or to manage communication with their students. In teaching and examining speaking and listening skills, the teachers used Zoom or

Google Meet as the teaching and learning media. On the other hand, the teachers also use Padlet and Google Classroom to conduct the reading and writing exams.

We also invited those teachers or the research samples to have an interview in order to dig up their perception of the role of learning media during the pandemic. Here are the results of the interview!

Table 1. Results of Interview

Question	P1	P2	P3
How important are the digital learning media in your English Class?	During this pandemic, it's very impactful.	It helps me a lot to manage my classes during distance learning.	It's very important since it can bridge the gap between me and my on-distance students.
What kind of media did you use in your class?	Zoom, Google Classroom, and WhatsApp	Google Meet, Padlet, and WhatsApp	WhatsApp, Zoom, and Google Classroom
How did you manage those media in your classroom?	I use those platforms to build classroom engagement, to deliver the material and to conduct the exam.	I used the media to teach my students, like explaining some materials to them and also to have the assessment.	I use Zoom to have the discussion and deliver the material to the students. I also use it for productive skills assessments. WhatsApp and Google classroom are used for receptive skills activities.
Do you think your chosen learning media can motivate students to get engaged during distance learning?	Yes, I do.	Surely. They help me a lot to manage my class.	I think so.

When teaching in distance learning, teachers are often faced with problems related to how to make it easier for students to learn. Teachers need to provide convenient media or facilitation in conveying information. On the other hand,

students who find it easy to receive information will learn to be more passionate and motivated.

Digital learning media has various roles in learning activities, especially in distance learning. During this time, the implementation of face to face learning may be more dependent on the presence of the teacher. In such situations, digital learning media may not be widely used by teachers. Or, if the media is used merely as a "tool" of learning. This view implies that there is no effort to empower the media in the learning process. Whereas learning media that are designed adequately can increase and advance students' interest in learning and provide support for the learning process effectively.

When the digital learning media served as a tool, it functioned to achieve the objectives of the learning process. It is based on the conviction that learning activities with the help of the media can improve the quality of student learning activities. Each subject has a varying level of difficulty, there are teaching materials that do not require tools, but there are also teaching materials that are very difficult so that they require tools. In addition, students will also easily feel tired and exhausted if in the process of distance learning does not get a clear explanation and description of the teacher.

Furthermore, the media also has a role as a source of learning, which means media can be used as a learning source for the students. Various forms and types of learning media used by teachers become a source of knowledge for students. The use of media in teaching and learning activities, especially for primary and secondary school is very important. It is because the presence of media is very helpful for students in understanding a certain concept. In bridging the media, students, and classroom activities, teachers hold the most significant roles to succeed in the learning activities of their students. The teacher should choose the right media according to the learning objectives. The teacher's inability to explain a material can be represented by the role of the media, so that learning objectives can be achieved as planned.

Creating a learning media needs to be well prepared so that learning objectives can be achieved. In general, designing a learning media can be done in several steps. First, teachers need to identify what students need. In designing a learning media, it must be based on what students need and the applicable curriculum so that it helps students master what is assigned to them. Second, they also should determine the instructional objectives. Instructional objectives can be in the form of behavior that the students are expected to have. Third, the teacher should then determine which parts of the material that will be included. This contains the materials that will be given to the students. After the materials that will be included have been decided, a learning media can then be composed based on those materials.

The learning media used by each teacher can be different because it depends on the teaching needs. Especially during this pandemic, teachers are required to present interesting learning materials so that students become enthusiastic about learning even from home. Absolutely, the learning media used are also adapted to students' circumstances, such as the availability of adequate learning facilities and equitable internet connections.

Conclusion

Digital media plays an important role in today's education since it facilitates teachers and learners in synchronous and asynchronous classrooms. An appropriate digital learning medium chosen by the teachers will elevate students' motivation to learn diligently, especially in online classrooms. This study found that digital platforms could be a bridge to help teachers get connected with the students through online learning. We recommend the teachers to manage the use of digital media based on the learning activities they have in the classroom so that students would not feel bored having many classes during remote learning.

References

- Anas, A. (2020, July 17). *Tantangan dan Peluang PJJ di Era New Normal*. Media Indonesia.
- Arifa, F. N. (2020). *Tantangan Pelaksanaan Kebijakan Belajar dari Rumah dalam Masa Darurat COVID-19*.
- Haddad, M. E. O., Ferreira, N. S. C., & Faria, A. A. (2014). The Use of Educational Technologies in Distance Education—Enabling the Appropriation of Teaching and Learning Process. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 02(01), 54–58. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2014.21006>
- Islam, S., & Hasan, A. S. M. M. (2016). The Use of Technology in Open and Distance Education: A Guideline for the Educational Institutions in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Applied Information System*, 10(4), 1–5.
- Manurung, M., Kirana, W. D., & Sari, D. E. (2021). Pemanfaatan Teknologi Media Pembelajaran Daring pada Masa Pandemi COVID-19. *Seminar Nasional PBSI IV*.
- Miarso, Y. (2009). *Sowing Educational Technology*. Kencana Prenada Media Group.
- Munadi, Y. (2008). *Media Pembelajaran: Sebuah Pendekatan Baru*. Gaung Persada Press.
- Musfiqon. (2012). *Development of Learning Media and Sources*. Prestasi Pustaka raya.
- Sukanto, D. (2020). Pembelajaran jarak jauh dengan media e-learning sebagai solusi pembelajaran pada masa pandemi COVID-19. *Syntax Idea*, 2(11), 834–850. <https://doi.org/10.36418/syntax-idea.v2i11.679>
- Wirartha, I. M. (2006). *Pedoman Penulisan Usulan Penelitian Skripsi dan Tesis*. Andi.