

Shifting critical listening class to virtual learning during the Covid-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Transforming the conventional face-to-face EFL learning into virtual learning has been believed to be an ideal alternative to education access in the middle of the COVID-19 outbreak. Hypothetically, abrupt transitions will require adaptation and rising practical predicament since the necessary toolkit must be allocated individually to conduct the listening Course. Thus, this study's purpose is to examine students' perception of the functioning of remote learning for Critical Listening class due to a prediction for drawing divergent language acquisition. This study involved forty-six students of the English education department at the Borneo University of Tarakan as research respondents. The data was recorded by distributing questionnaires and closed-ended questions through Google Forms and interview, while mixed analysis methodologies were applied. The questionnaire and interview result showed that students claim they struggle hard in the transitional phase and developing their educational outcomes. Most participants noticed an augmented listening performance in one teaching period, yet a higher chance of committing academic dishonesty than the prior learning circumstance. Therefore, the learning performance still needs enhancement in providing universally supported audios and solutions to plagiarism.



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1. Introduction

As the most traditional teaching and learning mode, the face-to-face class has been primarily applied in Indonesia for centuries. Face-to-face learning is defined as physical learning participation for periodic concourses. The students will be engaged in a learning activity, instructed by a teacher, following a specified teaching session schedule (Cooper, 2020). Face-to-face or conventional Learning is also known to provide a traditional education where the teacher is unimpeded to manage the whole learning process and is viewed as the key figure (Ananga & Biney, 2021). The face-to-face class combined teaching methods, e.g., writing, discussion, reading, group work, presentations, practice, and demonstration. Conventional style is believed to help reach effective knowledge transfer and communication between students and teachers (Astuti et al., 2019). Since the physical presence of a teacher and the interactive nature of face-to-face classes create a comfortable and welcoming learning environment, it is highly ideal encouraging students to participate in the learning process.

Unexpectedly, the whole culture of Learning that has been run inherently must meet massive and simultaneous alterations. Due to the Corona Virus (COVID-19) worldwide spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) attempted to break the chain of transmission by issuing orders to implement large-scale social restrictions universally (Bueno, 2020). This policy prompted the enactment of

regulation in Indonesia to restrict and address almost all public activities access on a virtual basis (Rasmitadila et al., 2020). In the formal education field, conventional teaching and learning program faces a significant obstacle in implementing the health protocols to a large extent, as they require the participation of students in each teaching session. Not seeing any better option, The Ministry of Education and Cultural has instructed a national mandate to shift the current teaching and learning activities with Study From Home (SFH) (Mendikbud, 2020). Consequently, both lecturers and students must continue to fulfill each duty and responsibility by assiduously exploiting efficacious learning technology as an alternative during the lockdown (Soni, 2020).

Transforming the prior learning activities into e-learning was assumed to prompt tensed adaptation and predicted a challenging transition owing to sudden and unexpected shifting (Crawford et al., 2020). In grappling with the abrupt change from brick-and-mortar education into total remote learning, challenges confront both parties (students and teachers) to maintain the educational performance (Dhawan, 2020). A study by Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) came up with challenges in carrying out pure virtual Learning during the coronavirus explosion, including the lack of readiness. Teachers admit that they did not have much time to prepare the backup learning system. A comparable level of chaos might apply to the students, heading to a disquieting adaptation and mean score drop. Meanwhile, online learning provides students with increased flexibility, convenience, and access to many courses and resources, making it a popular choice for many learners (Eppendi & Vega, 2020).

Since the learning access shifting is imposed to reduce human exposure to public space, the lecturers attempted to redesign the learning scheme to be more remotely reachable. Therefore, the current study concerns fully online learning that has been applied to tertiary education students. Even though virtual learning has been increasingly popular in the education pathway (Safsouf et al., 2018), studies in the learning proceeding literature generally observe carrying out face-to-face classes (Wang & Chen, 2013; Thai, Wever, & Valcke, 2020; Usher & Barak, 2020). In such a term, the lecturer and the learners can directly communicate precise pronunciation and exchange knowledge. Instead, some education providers opt to practice blended learning- a collaboration of face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction (Brian & Nikolaevna, 2016). Even though it is juxtaposed with blended Learning, fully online Learning develops another set of obstacles. Before the invasion of the 20's global pandemic, very little empirical research explicitly discussing pure virtual Learning was published (Sun, 2014).

The urge of traditional Learning attaches the most to a skill-based course that needs appropriate media to apply; For instance, a listening comprehension course. Listening skills are part of four principal EFL competencies that need to be honed by practicing, using third person assistance (audio and technology) (Arono, 2014). In concordance with Solak (2016) and , instead of a passive skill, Listening including an engaging and collaborative mechanism in which the listener generates sounds of speech and attempts to add meaning to spoken words. The recipient starts to identify the speaker's feelings and intended message to respond to verbal communication effectively (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). In EFL learning, listening skills are judged as essential, for the key to language learning is to obtain language input (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). In students' requirements to undertake any learning instruction, the importance of listening skills is highlighted as the most frequently exploited skill in the language classroom (Hamouda, 2013). In each listening session, specific media such as an audio player, headset, and Personal Computers are required to engage and support the learning process, available as a single laboratory set. By applying pure e-learning all through the nation, the equipped media must be accessible for students to experience similar learning circumstances; otherwise, students' chances to draw diverse feedback and language acquisition progress might be higher.

Several researchers have conveyed good news apropos the reliability of online Learning. A previous study proposed by Gördeslioğlu & Yüzer (2019) on how the Blackboard Learn works for second-semester students at Koc University confirms the virtual Learning is proven as a supportive invention to achieve a higher level of listening competency in a brief span, yet still, lack in developing an adequate student-teacher interaction. Contemplating this issue, it is worth demanding an interactive and accessible learning media for the prevalent distribution of information. It is affirmed that utilizing smartphone apps as learning media potentially encourages students' self-paced Learning since it enables learners to access content practically anywhere and anytime (Mindog, 2016). There is number of mobile applications that provide instant messaging, and the WhatsApp application is on the top-ranked list (Cetinkaya, 2017). Church & De Oliveira (2013) emphasize this point by stating that WhatsApp has risen in popularity due to economic reasons, requiring low data cost, and being more

social-conversational. This hype then has been brought into the EFL teaching path by Setyowati (2019), where she has shown profitable completion after creating a learning WhatsApp group. Without significant problems, Wijaya Putra senior high school students enjoy learning as their listening performance increases.

In response to the former studies, the current research concerns to discuss WhatsApp as a primary educational technology to conduct the main listening comprehension class agenda to seek renewal and discovery for handy EFL learning media. The study pairs verified the significance and efficiency of fully online learning and were taken from the education provider's perspective. As appointed earlier, literature review on pure virtual learning is somewhat scarce in quantity; it gets rarer when it comes to virtual listening classes for tertiary education students. The course objectives are pretty at a high pace, requiring the students to develop listening comprehension in advanced spoken English. Therefore, this research aim was to examine students' perception of the functioning of remote Learning for Critical Listening class due to a prediction for drawing divergent language acquisition.

2. Method

2.1. Research Participant and Context of the Study

The required listening course targets the English Department students in the fourth semester of the academic year, particularly at the Borneo University of Tarakan, North Kalimantan, Indonesia. The purpose of this course is to have excellent comprehension in listen for specific personal information, listen for prediction, listen for greetings and introduction, listen for completing and note-taking, listen for evaluating, comparing with own reaction, and rating, and listen for specific information. One semester's activities revolved around eight units and were distributed in 16 meetings, covering mid-term and final exams. Also, this course possesses a prerequisite, an interpretive listening course, before the students take this course.

This research took 46 participants, all of whom were undergraduate-fourth-semester students enrolled in a critical listening class of the English Education Department at Borneo University of Tarakan in North Kalimantan. The participants were recruited via course credit for their participation.

Each meeting started with a class discussion where the students had an introduction to the material. Technically, three platforms (WhatsApp, Kahoot, and iSpring Cloud) were applied variously in each session. After topic orientation, the lecturer shared the audio in WhatsApp group chat one by one. The tagged student was instructed to take at least one unsolved question in each meeting and share it with the class alternately. Done with the listening session, the students attended a Kahoot quiz session to recollect what they had learned with fun. Finally, in every eight meetings, the exam will be administered on the iSpring Cloud website.

2.2. Research Design

This study has been conducted using a mixed-method design by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Each issue's paradigm is the initial data collection as qualitative and quantitative data in interviews to grant a broader insight into the investigated study. The mixed-methods analysis presents the opportunity to conduct more meaningful, detailed, and deliberate research than the case using only a single approach (qualitative or quantitative) (Whitehead & Schneider, 2012). Besides, it provides the researcher with other valuable instruments to apply to their research expertise.

The study utilized a mixed-methods research design, which involved collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire that assessed the participants' perception of the virtual class of critical listening. The survey consisted of standardized measures of virtual class performance during covid-19 pandemic. The qualitative data was collected through interviews with a subset of participants who reported high responses to the survey questionnaire. The interviews focused on exploring the participants' experiences of an online class in more detail.

2.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The research data were collected from the second-year students in the English Education Department of the Borneo University of Tarakan in North Borneo. They were asked for their perception of the distanced learning application on the Critical Listening course. Respondents'

impressions were recorded in questionnaires and interviews in the form of open-ended questions to perceive the students' background in their preceding claims. The data were collected on two separate occasions through Google form links; the first attempt was taken from May 17 to 22nd, 2020, while the second distribution was from May 30 to June 1, 2020. The enrolled students in the critical listening class were 74, and only 46 students actively participated in an online class since they found an unstable internet connection in their environment.

Questionnaires used in this research composed of one identical type of item using a four-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire was designed to determine students' perceptions of the sudden curriculum digitalization (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). It was statistically calculated to measure each statement's attitude ratio and then presented in a descriptive approach. The interview questions were designed to explore the students' experiences with virtual learning and how it has impacted their critical listening skills. The interviews provided more detailed and in-depth information on the students' perceptions of virtual learning and how it has affected their learning outcomes. The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews were analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns. It enables the researchers to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected critical listening classes in a virtual learning environment.

3. Findings and Discussion

Out of all the 74 students engaged in the online learning proceedings, only 46 shared their views (37.84% non-participant). The data show a diverse perception of the online learning application, revealing that digitizing the Critical Listening Course class gave students a taste of a more advanced battlefield. More than half of the respondents struggled due to the adaptation phase but still managed to stabilize their academic performance. Here is the result of the obtained data analysis.

3.1. Students' Impressions on the Current E-Learning

The questionnaire findings recorded students' various experiences in applying e-learning in the Critical Listening course. The most conspicuous admission comes from the idea of the dysfunctional application for most participants, considering specific issues that came along while conducting the learning session (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondent Responses to virtual Critical Listening Class

No	Statement	Response			
		SA	A	D	SD
1	Virtual learning is beneficial in the middle of a global pandemic	4	32	7	3
2	I experienced rapid adaptation to the online learning	3	27	12	4
3	Online learning is challenging	9	33	3	1
4	I have external issues that affect the learning process	8	31	7	-
5	I find it troublesome to access the learning platform	11	21	13	1
6	I always join the online class on time and participate well	4	25	15	2
7	The given material is accessible and easy to understand	2	14	23	7
8	I find it hard to communicate with classmates and lecturer during the learning session	8	24	14	-
9	I need some help to access the learning platform	7	25	14	-
10	The lecturer provides explicit instruction during the learning session	4	24	16	2
11	I can easily focus during the entire listening session	5	21	18	2
12	Submitting any assignment counts to be convenient	3	29	12	2
13	I find it burdensome to speak through a voice note	5	18	20	3
14	The online exam form counts to be user-friendly	3	26	17	-
15	The distribution of the audios is disorganized and affect the effectiveness of the session	5	24	17	-
16	Online learning gives me an efficient learning experience	4	24	12	6
17	Switching to online Learning does not affect my progress in language acquisition	4	22	20	-
18	Online learning helps me improve my listening skill	2	32	10	2
19	I prefer to learn online with the chosen platform as the medium rather than the conventional class in my future learning.	1	9	15	2

^a. Source: adapted from Joshi et al., 2015

Though numerous obstacles have emerged and were involved in the sessions' affectivity, out of 46 respondents, 65.2% do not deal with a lengthy adjustment to the new education scheme. Moreover, 63% of students realize their excellent attendance and performance during class. Over and above, 73.9% of them proclaimed augmented listening skills in a time. The factors mainly arrive from the platform's accessibility for the learning material (audios, PowerPoint, and eBook) and the lecturer's explicit instruction. Even though, the online class issues appeared, still the main objectives of learning had been met on a fairly broad scale, and most participants wished to shift back to face-to-face learning for the subsequent application.

3.2. Feedback to the Online Learning

The qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions indicate WhatsApp as the most favored platform throughout the e-learning period (92.6% vote). The chosen media has been a place to access the learning content and perform the teaching-learning activity (listening and discussion session). Therefore, as a primary learning platform, an abundance of praise and judgment during the implementation was varied and intriguing.

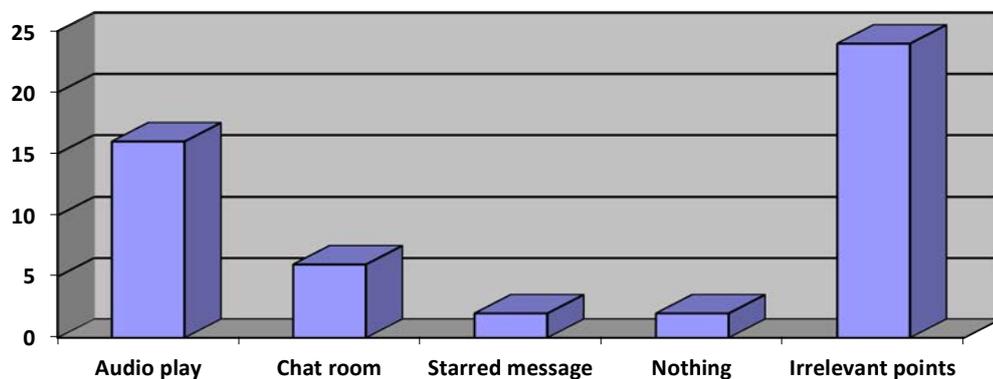


Fig. 1. Respondents' View on WhatsApp Features

The participants have been questioned on traits in the learning platforms that support their listening skill acquisition. The analysis proves that Whatsapp's mobile version is operated twice as much as the desktop version, for it is a less effortful way to get connected. Simultaneously, the rest tend to access the online listening class by exploiting both of the choices synchronously. Besides the low-cost and convenient access as the prominent advantage, several distinctive highlights are on the list. Conforming to the graph above, the most approved feature in WhatsApp win by the audio play, followed by the chat room and starred message.

The interview findings showed that how the learning process turns out to be more comfortable with infinite audio plays. Through WhatsApp, the students are allowed to repeat the given audios limitlessly to perfect the assessment. Moreover, the audios must have automatically downloaded before it is ready to listen, leading to a flexible practice at any time. Another stated preferential is the chat room feature and starred message. A chat room as a learning forum is where the lecturer shared the material and assignment through chat, and the contents are counted to be intelligible. The task collection system is also accessible and convenient; the assignments were submitted through group chat rooms. The starred message feature obtains the same amount of votes as the chat room does. It technically functions as a 'bookmark' of the platform to compile the critical messages and files.

The open-ended question defined that with the platform's features, the students have many chances to practice and an open-access learning resource. The students' lexicon got extended, resulting in more vital listening skills after WhatsApp mediated the class. The current learning scheme also pushes the students to be more productive in-class participation. The tense of learning surprisingly builds their critical thinking and structure accuracy. Although positive feedbacks are flooding, the absence of deficiencies is still quite hard to evade. The data shows that 45.5% of participants agree with the language acquisition improvements, whereas the other 31.8% questioned the new learning mode's advantages. Some of them claimed that there was no discernible transformation to their listening skills during the period of learning.

For some, the learning activity appears to be less advantageous in performance. Respondents likewise affirmed their inclination to switch back to the prior learning circumstance.

- Does distance learning give any benefit to critical listening acquisition progress?

Actually, not really. Many applications are used interchangeably, which makes the students increasingly bored during the learning activity. Moreover, e-learning makes us less likely to practice our communication skills directly.

- If, any chance, the future listening class is continuously conducted online, is there any hesitation?

We (partly participants) prefer face-to-face class because the material was delivered in a way more graspable than in the online course. Despite students' interlanguage that might influence the learning activity, 84.78% of participants faced particular external issues during online learning.

- Is there any specific trouble in conducting online learning? If there is any, what are those?

In some cases, the audio was not supported in the iOS version did hinder us (partly participants) from doing my best in class. Another time, personally, the device's memory was full, which created a problem in downloading the audio and a weak internet connection.

3.3. Respondents Suggestion

Students feel that the amount of material should be increased, and the task's duration should be extended. The accessible audio format should be available, considering some operating systems in students' devices do not support the play. Some thought that the online lectures mediated by WhatsApp should be implemented earlier and are willing to cope in the next semester, while the rest considered to shift back to the conventional class or alter the learning platform, regarding the high chances of committing plagiarism.

3.4. Discussion

Although online class was challenging and problematic, the study found that shifting to the new learning mode, a Critical Listening course (online learning), was revealed to be favored and helpful. The respondents find the online class better in assisting them to participate in the class activity, although it offers more barriers than beneficial (Halim & Hashim, 2019; Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020; Al-Amin, Zubayer, Deb, & Hasan, 2021; Eppendi, Muliawaty, & Aisyah, 2021). Besides, immediate acceptance and adaptation are deemed to take place. In creating a proportionate learning application, the required media in distanced Learning should support the learning objectives. However, the provided audio file yet capable of covering the students' situational diversity on particular occasions.

In line with Setyowati (2019) & Gördeslioğlu & Yüzer (2019), augmented listening skills are shown with another soft skill proficiency. Another point is that the rise in students' confidence in delivering their opinions is significant. However, this finding exposes an issue that (Setyowati, 2019) did not find, where her finding was the positive effect and students' exemplary performance in an online class. Compared to her study, the current findings show minimum misbehavior in the class discussion. Most of the time, the students use formal English while holding the discussion but do code-switching when they have peer discussion.

On the other hand, the present research highlights the students' various capacities to reach the learning forum, whereas poor connection got involved in 26% of participants. The university students typically come from sundry domiciles throughout the nation. The research participants themselves originated from hometowns scattered across the North Borneo province, counting rural and border areas. Those who are trapped in unstable internet networks are rather live in rural or suburban areas. After all, individual states of network source causing a lack of access to reliable internet network are generally following the instruction of virtual education (Jibrin et al., 2017); (Adnan & Anwar, 2020); Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Dhawan, 2020).

Notwithstanding the problematic learning circumstance, participants deduced that virtual learning helps them acquire listening skills effectively. This result approves the amount of research that associates WhatsApp with the online class (Fauzi & Angkasawati, 2019; Setyowati, 2019; Dewi, 2019). The lecturer's explicit instruction was admitted as an advantage proving how the

communication realms amongst the distanced learners and lecturer were appropriately built, filling the gap in the study of Gördeslioğlu & Yüzer (2019). Despite this, a small number of students encounter different states of affairs. Miscommunication throughout the learning session was reported to be falling due to the lack of explanation. Besides, the distribution of the audios is disorganized. There is no definite time limit in the individual listening section, which affects the session's efficacy. Since the students only give the material with insufficient instruction, that leads students get confused when the material is done.

The adoption of online learning obliquely detaches elements of homogeneity from the formal learning culture. Limited access to the audio files for iOS users leads to troublesome downloads and contributes significantly to their academic performance. They have to access the m4a format file on other devices, explaining why some participants project duality access. Otherwise, being out of presence is the worst choice. Aside from this issue, the students succeed in adjusting the requisite toolkit. By utilizing features of WhatsApp to reconstruct the teaching and learning environment, a virtual listening class is not impossible for being close to wholly relevant. On the other hand, the sophomores' language proficiency appeared to get caught up—the inadequate mental lexicon yields suboptimal performance to interpret several phrases in the speaker's speech. This fact strengthens by 65.2% voices, affirmed the material comprehension is almost out of their league.

A higher level of academic fraud has been detected among online learning practices, for it is easier to commit than in face-to-face class. The un-proctored assessments and examinations are prone to plagiarism, especially when the given time for each topic is more than sufficient. The user's device is easily compatible to access multiple platforms concurrently, e.g., search engines. One of the threats to implementing online tests is that students may present fraudulent behavior and do unethical acts (Munoz & Mackay, 2019). Cheating has been recognized as a common phenomenon (Raines et al., 2011), but still, none of such misbehavior should be neglected under the term of education. Whereas a student is willing to cheat, then the educational outcomes will be depreciated. More certain learning activities are deemed necessary under plagiarism as a serious ethical offense. Fighting it from the root of the problem will somewhat bring up an effective solution. In remote assessments, teleconference offers to facilitate proctoring and conclusively avert cheating (Hylton et al., 2016). Other online testing applications have conducted examinations in a supervised environment by blocking access beyond the Learning Management System (Ghauth & Abdullah, 2010). Holistic proctoring ensures identity verification and assessment behavior monitor. The stated notion where students are more likely to cheat in uncontrolled environments than in supervised settings propped these findings (Khalid et al., 2014).

The robust platform excellently accommodates learning activity through its reliable features. In the light of its primary function as the communication media, WhatsApp has been a daily basis for various levels of society, counting in lecturers and students. The familiarities brought up by WhatsApp helps to create a more natural learning atmosphere. By the convenience granted, the intention to build a clear comprehension within each meeting has been achieved with lighter effort. However, the enhancement of the execution in the future retains expected.

4. Conclusion

This compiling of dual sides of pure virtual listening comprehension class contributed to complete and widened technology utilization in education literature, as the study's scope is a novel discovery. Implementing SFH throughout the nation will set a hypothesize being challenging in transition. The students have to anticipate the need for the required online listening tools to attain the planned learning goals. However, the students can accommodate the learning media, even though the provided audios are inaccessible to every device. In most cases, students noticed an improvement in their language acquisition during the virtual class and were provided with a practical learning experience. Regardless, most respondents preferred to switch back to the face-to-face class as they believed direct deliverance of teaching materials remains an essential part of learning. However, another reason why is online learning increases opportunities for plagiarism. In a condition where none of us can predict the end of the mandatory remote activities, this research provided an insightful manual that needs minor enhancement. Discussed alternatives and advancement referring to the applied virtual learning can be internalized in prospective learning and study.

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