EFL Learners' Experiences in Using Zoom Meeting during COVID-19 Outbreak

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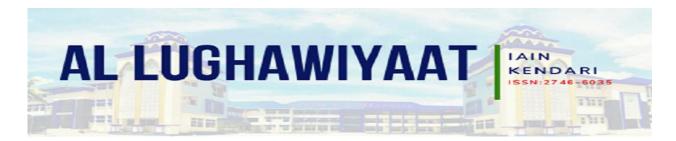*Corresponding e-mail: dewi.atikah70@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, the usage of online platforms, such as Zoom meetings, to facilitate the learning process in EFL classrooms is gaining ground. As students are heavily involved in the use of this platform, it is vital to investigate their platform usage experience. Using questionnaires and self-reflection, 17 English Education Department students' data were collected and analyzed qualitatively based on intrinsic pleasantness, novelty, goal/need significance, coping capability, and norm/self-compatibility. The study reveals that students benefited from the platform's learning benefits, such as its ability to help them learn and simulate a traditional classroom, as well as its ability to record and save videos during meetings, use a filter, schedule online meetings, facilitate clear presentations by displaying PowerPoints, and use a video call. However, the majority of students must occasionally deal with unstable networks, which is one of the conditions for using Zoom meeting. Consequently, this study suggests that Zoom meetings may be a viable option for altering the teaching and learning process in actual classrooms during a Covid-19 pandemic.
Keywords: *COVID-19; Learners' experience; Zoom platform.*

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on human life, particularly the educational system. To combat the COVID-19 epidemic, it is highly suggested that online classes be used in the education sector because students are expected to study at home. Several internet systems, including Google Schoology, Classroom, Hangouts, WhatsApp group, and the Zoom platform, provide online learning. According to Lenkaitis (2019), Students are connecting electronically in real time using tools such as live internet chat and videoconferencing (Zoom platform). Additionally, the Zoom platform may assist students engage in collaborative online learning. Adenegan & Abiodun (2018) pointed out that through video conferencing, self-motivated students can communicate, share resources, review one another's work, and then study.

In the Indonesian context, Vitoria, Mislinawati, and Nurmasyitah (2018) show the advantages of e-learning that the students perceived the e-learning web-based module to be useful in improving their understanding, independence, self-discipline, motivation to learn, and

interactions with each other and with the teacher. The study confirms that online learning is very helpful for students, one of which is using the Zoom platform.

As a result of the widespread adoption of remote class delivery by schools and universities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Zoom classrooms have become the standard among students and teachers. The present Zoom class format differs in two ways from prior distant class experiences, such as online courses and online degree programs. First, holding Zoom classes and other video-meeting technologies to develop social separation in order to mitigate the terrible effects of the current epidemic is a temporary technique. Second, as a result of the pandemic's impact, social isolation and a potentially challenging home situation emerge as significant stresses (Zhang, M. 2020).

There have been numerous studies discussing the utilization of the Zoom platform in the business and academic worlds. Some scholars also discussed the usage of Zoom in the workplace or for data collection as a research tool. In their research (Archibald et al., 2019) asked the participants who participated in online qualitative interviews about their experiences of using Zoom and concurrently recorded researcher observations. However, there is still rarely research that discusses EFL learners' experience in using Zoom platform during COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the situation, the researcher attempted to find the experiences of EFL students while attending online learning that focuses on using the Zoom platform during this COVID-19 pandemic. The result of the research was to give a representation of students' experiences in using the Zoom platform during this COVID-19 outbreak. This will provide students, lecturers, and also universities to consider the use of online learning, especially through the Zoom platform.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative descriptive method approach to investigate students' experiences regarding the Zoom platform and answer the research questions. The qualitative data were analyzed using a questionnaire and students' reflection based on intrinsic pleasantness, novelty, goal/need significance, coping potential, and norm/self-compatibility of using the Zoom platform. A total of 17 students responded to the questionnaire and reflection. A questionnaire consisting of 11 statements adapted from Eurostat (2017), while the reflection consisting of 5 questions adapted from Fung & Hoon (2013) consisting of students' experiences amid using the Zoom platform. The instruments are based on the updated version of (Scherer & Fontaine's, 2018) components of appraisals. The researcher distributed the questionnaire and reflection through Whatsapp documents periodically. After collecting the questionnaire data, the researcher calculates the data, classifies, and analyzed it. The technique of data analysis was narrative analysis adopted from (Simamora., 2020)

RESULT

The question about the intrinsic pleasantness of using the Zoom platform in the reflection aimed to determine the advantages of Zoom platform use as the online learning media during the COVID-19 situation. As the students were required to learn from home, they demonstrated that the Zoom platform can be the best platform to recover the learning process in the real class, as evidenced by the response of 10 students who felt the Zoom platform was a good platform to

change the real class. 7 students said the Zoom platform can help them to understand the materials well, 6 students said the Zoom platform can be used as the online learning media to replace the learning process in the classroom during COVID-19, 5 students said the features of the Zoom platform were easy to access and could be used as an online learning media, and 4 students said the Zoom platform was really good to be used to online presentation because the features of this platform support the students. The following is the students' reaction based on the first statement:

"The benefit of using Zoom is that it is easy to understand the material, such as when the teacher is previewing the PPT, it can be seen compared to studying in class" (ST.1)

"First, Zoom can facilitate the online lecture process in the pandemic era, because its features are very easy to operate, such as simplifying online presentations using power points or other files. Second, the Zoom application can also be accessed, accessible to all people" (ST.5)

"The benefits that I get while using the Zoom platform are that it makes it easier to interact and participate in learning activities, webinars, meetings, and remote discussions without having to meet in person." (ST.12)

Then, the purposes of the question about the novelty of using the Zoom platform in the reflection investigated the differences between using the Zoom platform and the other online learning platform; during this COVID-19 pandemic, the students have multiple learning platforms; based on the results of reflection, the participants agreed that the Zoom platform is easier to access, to use, and to help them comprehend the materials taught by the lecturers in online learning. The data reveals that 9 students said that the Zoom platform has many functions that the other platform lacks, such as the ability to capture and preserve videos during the conference, brighten your facial skin tone, customize the background, organize online meetings, etc. In addition, six students indicate that one of the advantages of the Zoom platform is that it can invite hundreds of students to the online class, whereas the other platform can only invite a few students. The student responses are based on the following statement:

"It is very easy because, in addition to making it easier to present clearly, you can also ask directly to the lecturer if something is not understood, this is, of course, different from other platforms such as WA, it can only be done with messages or voice notes, although video calls can be made the participants are limited so that they do not effective, while the Zoom can be followed even though hundreds of students" (ST.5)

"When compared to other platforms, the Zoom platform is better used for learning because the explanation of the material presented is more detailed and I can understand the material well" (ST.9)

"What distinguishes Zoom platform from other platforms is that Zoom can load pastes up to 1000 and Zoom data is also not as much as other applications" (ST.17)

The question about Goal/Need Importance from the reflection aimed to explain some obstacles of the Zoom platform used during the COVID-19 pandemic because, when using the Zoom platform during the pandemic, the students encountered some obstacles of this platform,

which is sometimes the reason they have difficulty following online learning and are even unwilling to learn. As evidence for the above explanation, thirteen students responded that the weakness of this platform is that it requires very difficult internet networking to do the class, without the network the students cannot attend the online class, and even when the network is interrupted, the students cannot see the share screen, or the sound drops, and even frequently come in, out, and cannot enter at all, so that students miss important explanations from the lecturer. Six pupils opined that the Zoom platform requires a very large internet quota; on occasion, students left class because the quota ran out. Two of them claim that when online learning is in operation, the lecturer cannot control the class in relation to their presenting because students can turn off the camera, making it possible that they are not paying attention to the lecturer, or because students sometimes accidentally turn on the sound, resulting in a noisy classroom. The following students' responses are representative of all participants:

> "The drawback that I encountered with Zoom was that in my opinion, this platform needed very strong Internet access, so to use it I had to find a place with good Internet access. If not, usually I can't see the share screen, or the sound drops, and I even often come in and can't enter at all" (ST.3)

> "The obstacles in the Zoom platform are poor network and data packages so as a result, the material obtained is not clear, and the most important thing is that there is a lack of concentration on the material, usually if other friends don't turn the sound feature off, it ends up being noisy" (ST.5)

> "The problem I get while using the Zoom platform is that when I have a weak internet network connection, I often bounce in and out of the Zoom platform" (ST.8)

It was related to their experiences during this situation that they had to study from by online platform however their condition, the students feel using the Zoom platform is challenging, it confirms by the result of students reflections that shows 9 students feel challenged to use the Zoom platform when the internet network goes bad, the students feel challenged to use the Zoom platform, and the aim of this reflection question is to categorize the challenges of using the Zoom platform during COVID-19, because it was related to their experiences during this situation that they had to study from by online The difficulty was experienced by the class captain as well; at times, it was perplexing when he sought to deliver class learning on the Zoom platform. Four of these pupils believe that utilizing the Zoom platform does not present any challenges for them. The following is a compilation of the responses given by the students to represent all of the participants:

> "The only challenge I face in using Zoom is that to use it I always have to try to find a good network access point. Meanwhile, in my area, internet access is not always stable. I often get into trouble with that. So this is a challenge for me" (ST.3)

> "In my opinion, the challenge in using the Zoom platform is on the network, if there is my course schedule and my network is unstable, I have to go to my friend or aunt's house who has WIFI so I can attend lectures smoothly from start to finish" (ST.9)

"Some of the things that make me challenged are how to create a link to be used by the lecturer later to teach, that was my first experience, and it was very challenging where I had to tinker and figure out how to room Zoom and share the link" (ST.16)

The purpose of the question about the norm/self-compatibility of using the Zoom platform during the COVID-19 pandemic is to determine what the students' responses and experiences were while using the Zoom platform as most online platforms were used as a substitute for face-to-face class during the COVID-19 pandemic and the students gained many experiences. Some of them are new styles of learning, with both positive and negative experiences. The result of students' reflections indicates that, when online learning is first applied and the Zoom platform is used as a learning medium, six students feel confused and unable to operate this platform effectively; they don't know how to turn on or off the sound and camera, and they are even afraid to use it. After utilizing this platform for a while, they've had both positive and negative experiences, and have concluded that using this platform provides them with amazing virtual learning experiences and many benefits in this learning setting. However, eight of them have negative experiences with the Zoom platform due to non-conducive networks and excessive internet usage. The following students' responses are representative of all participants:

"Since the beginning, using the Zoom platform, making it easier for me when the lecturer gave material or explained material. It's just that I'm stuck on the network. If the free Zoom might be very good" (ST.7)

"I have started to know little by little the technology that is developing in various countries, especially the development of technology in applications. I think the Zoom app is cool. Because the system used is not difficult for us to access and the implementation of teaching and learning is not much different from offline learning in class" (ST.13)

"At the beginning of use, I didn't know how to activate the voice of the person speaking, so after I searched, I finally got a new understanding regarding that and how to raise my hand and chat in Zoom" (ST.16)

DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher presented a discussion of the research findings. This study described the experiences encountered by EFL students while using the Zoom platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were obtained through two instruments that are questionnaire and students' reflection. The result of the research showed that students have positive responses to the implementation of using the Zoom platform in online learning during this COVID-19 situation. Based on the data of the questionnaire analysis indicated most students were interested in using the Zoom platform as an online learning medium to replace the face-to-face learning. It also showed that there were many experiences which they found, they found some difficulties and also easier to study from home during this pandemic, they found some difficulties with the Zoom platform as an online learning media, Zoom platform also can make students easy to get the point of materials that the lecturer has been taught while online learning process.

Besides, based on the data of students' reflection analysis that identified the students' experiences of Zoom platform used during COVID-19, there are three aspects described in this study

that related to the categories based on (Scherer & Fontaine, 2018). Novelty and intrinsic pleasantness explained the benefits of Zoom platform use as an online learning media, and the differences of Zoom with the other online platform. showed the experiences of using the Zoom platform.

With regards to the novelty and intrinsic pleasantness category, the finding revealed that the Zoom platform can help the students to learn and change the real class during this pandemic situation. It also helps them to understand the materials well. In other cases, such learning builds students to have a stronger visual and read-and-write learning style (Putri et al.,' 2020). The students can use the Zoom platform to be the online learning media to replace the learning process in the class during COVID-19. Besides, features of the Zoom platform is easy to access and used as an online learning media, and then really good to be used to online presentation.

The presented data also showed that most of the students agreed that the Zoom platform is the best platform to be easier to access, use, and understand the materials taught by the lecturers in online learning class during the COVID-19 pandemic, this because the features on the Zoom platform can control the class well and the students can see the lecturer like at the real class teaching, even when they did not understand the materials, they can ask the question at the same time by the comments column or turn on the voice and ask the questions. It indicates that students have a positive response towards the online learning activities in this pandemic, they participated the online learning as a user-friendly learning tool that encourages them to interact with their teachers and peers. Furthermore, on the other study, (Sari Famularsih, 2020) has a different result that showed the students have negative responses namely too much homework and inadequate facilities in online learning make them hard to conduct it, no doubt that students' favorite online application is WhatsApp group because this application takes a bit of internet quota rather than other applications.

With regards to the goal/need significance and coping potential, the findings of this study showed that the students got some obstacles of this platform, sometimes this is the reason they often have difficulty following online learning, this platform needs very hard internet networking to do the online class, need very big internet quota, the lecturer cannot control the class related to their presenting or when the students accidentally turned on the sound so that the class becomes noisy. In the same case, Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison (2020) found similar constraints in terms of how internet accessibility can affect online teaching and learning. They analyzed national, institutional, and pedagogical responses in a Portuguese context where lack of internet access and student equipment were common problems aspiring teachers had to face.

The data presented also showed that the students feel challenged to use the Zoom platform when the internet network goes bad, they cannot get all of the points of information from the lecturer because the teacher's voice explaining became choppy or the students come in and come out from the meeting, and then miss the important explanations from the lecturer. On the other research, Sari Famularsih (2020) argued that, this very important to check students' facilities for online learning such as smart phone, personal computer, internet connection, and electricity.

With regards to the norm/self-compatibility, at the start of using the Zoom platform, students feel confused and difficult to operate this platform well, they don't know how to turn on or turn off the sound and camera, but after using it for a while, all of them feel that this platform gives them great experiences and also many benefits, they got the new style to study, also good and bad experiences. However, some of them feel the bad experiences in the Zoom platform use related to non-conducive networks, very large internet quota usage. In the analyses of the other

study, (Hasan & Khan, 2020) showed that students enjoyed learning through online mode if proper facilities were accessible to them, flexibility in terms of time and place was found to be the most liked feature of online learning, but, at the same time, poor network and connectivity were highly disliked elements. Poor connectivity might prove to be the major cause of other disadvantages of online (Hasan & Khan, 2020).

These findings revealed that the students found many benefits of using the Zoom platform, but also got some difficulties or some obstacles in using this platform. The researcher found that all the students feel the benefits of using Zoom such as can help them to learn and change the real class, various interesting features that can record and save videos of the entire meeting so we can see the material again, brighten the face by the filters, change the background as desired, schedule online meetings, displays many of the best features that easy to apply, can display power points to facilitate/support clear presentations with video calls system. A similar study by Nurieva & Garaeva (2020) also revealed the same thing about the Zoom platform comparing to other video web conferencing applications, the result findings showed that Zoom was better suited to distance learning than alternative platforms such as Skype because the connection is reliable; the quality of video and audio is excellent, more available tools. Simultaneous screen share, virtual background, active speaker view, desktop and application sharing, private and group chat, the option "Raise hand," breakout rooms were mentioned as one of the Zoom advantages. However, the students also got some problems when doing the online learning and some obstacles of the Zoom platform use.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this research, it concluded that Zoom becomes an alternative online learning media in teaching English for EFL learners amid the COVID-19 pandemic. It can help the replacement of face-to-face learning process into learning from home activities so that it runs optimally by adjusting to the current pandemic situation. Lecturers and students carry out distance learning activities to reduce learning barriers. Through Zoom, lecturers and students can conduct video conference that is used as a means of communication in online learning as a substitute for real meetings in offline class although it is not quite effective due to the lack internet signal and the low internet quota that causes intermittent voice, the lack of students' level of understanding on the material being taught, and the difficulty in controlling the class related to their presenting or when the students accidentally turned on the sound so that the class becomes noisy.

However, the Zoom platform was better than other educational platforms because it facilitates distance learning and enables discussion between lecturers and students or among the students like in a real classroom. The important point that must be considered is the continuity of the video conference at this Zoom depends on the internet network so that lecturers and students must use good and supportive internet access to use the Zoom application for taking part in learning activities.

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