

CHALLENGES AND FUTURES OF UBIQUITOUS LEARNING IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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SUBMISSION TRACK	A B S T R A C T
Submitted : 24 August 2022 Accepted : 3 October 2022 Published : 18 October 2022	<p>This research aims at analyzing the challenges and the potential futures of the implementation of ubiquitous learning in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) in Indonesian context. This study employed descriptive qualitative research design with observation and interview as the data collection techniques. The samples of this research participants were 50 bachelor degree students majoring in English Education who were chosen through random sampling technique. After the data were attained, they were analyzed to answer the research questions of what challenges and futures of ubiquitous learning in Indonesian TEFL context were. The research findings presented that three major challenges in the implementation of ubiquitous learning in TEFL were technical problems (internet connection-related problems) which took 50% of the concerns, devices operating competence which had 30% of the attentions, and students' attitude which had 20% of the problems. About the futures of ubiquitous learning in TEFL context, the participants testified that ubiquitous learning could be an excellent alternative to study from anywhere and at any time (40%), 30% suggested technical readiness to optimize the learning outcome, the other 20% thought that Indonesian students were not ready for the implementation of ubiquitous learning, and another 10% stayed neutral to the option. These findings contribute to fill the gap of the controversies of ubiquitous learning implementation. It is suggested that future researchers took deeper examination related to this topic.</p>
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Introduction

The field of education faces a lot of challenges and a whole lot of shifts happened here and there due to Covid-19 pandemics including the sector of education. UNESCO (2020) admitted that Covid-19, as the most catastrophic global pandemic in this century, has successfully disrupted various factors. Even, the field of education was said to be severely affected on such a large scale. Both the teachers and students were forced to adjust everything to maintain the teaching and learning process without sacrificing their life safety because the virus was spreading inevitably. It was supported by Li & Lalani (2020) as they pronounced that more than 60% of the world's student population were struggling to maintain their education. In addition, governments all around the world had a hard time to predict when the normal classroom teaching may resume. Therefore, there have been a lot of commotion about the use of various online teaching platforms and strategies to keep learning process continues.

Ubiquitous learning appears to be popular to answer the educators' concern on how to maintain teaching and learning process during Covid-19 pandemics. As a matter of fact, a previous review by Lai & Hwang (2015) highlighted that teaching strategies with the help of mobile technology from many previous studies were proven to be effective and, consequently, they proposed a series of mobile and ubiquitous learning approaches to help bridging the in-class and outdoor instruction in school. As a matter of

fact, there are several effectiveness and efficiency charms offered by ubiquitous learning. Malar, et al. (2019) agreed that ubiquitous learning enables learners to learn at anytime, anywhere through wireless network environment using context-aware techniques. By making use of the advancement of technology devices, it is expected that the teaching and learning process can be optimized.

However, the previous studies related to the implementation of online or ubiquitous learning approach still faced a lot of challenges and problems. Previous studies conducted by Bao (2020) and Fansury, et al. (2020) exhibited that teachers and students did not have prior experience of engaging online teaching and learning even though the concept of online class was not something new. As a matter of fact, they had minimum time to be ready for the sudden shift from attending face-to-face classes to online classes. Another research done by Sahu (2020) exploring teachers' perception of working and teaching online found that only 32 percent of them felt competent to teach in online platforms. In addition, only a little portion of research put sufficient attention to the challenges faced in the implementation of ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. As a matter of fact, TEFL is growing more and more interest of Indonesian students. Therefore, this research findings will grant beneficial contribution to both theoretical and practical significances. Moreover, this research also aims at discovering the insights on the futures of ubiquitous learning in Indonesian context of teaching English as a foreign language. As mentioned by Hwang, et al. (2017), teachers are encouraged to design learning activities using any features of technologies and make sure that the utilization of technologies has reached the maximum effects on students' learning outcome instead of just use technologies to be a channel for providing learning materials. Thus, it is urgent to conduct this research to find the opportunities of ubiquitous learning implementation's futures, especially in Indonesian TEFL context.

Research Method

This research employed descriptive qualitative approach to answer the research questions. The research design was chosen because the collected data were related to ideas and perceptions which could not be appraised by numbers. The purpose of this study focuses on analyzing the challenges and futures of ubiquitous learning implementation in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia. The data were explored by using the perceptions and experiences of Indonesian students who went through the teaching and learning process when they were in a situation impacted by Covid-19 and had ubiquitous learning. In conducting the research, the students used LMS called Edlink to run the teaching and learning process where the students could access the materials and assignment from anywhere. The selection of using qualitative descriptive was appropriate as mentioned by Yusuf in (Fahmi, et al., 2021) that this design is utilized to explain a situation or event precisely and accurately than any other method. In addition, this approach is intense, capable of completely recording data from the field, and superior in comprehending specific conditions (Yunanda et al., 2022). The descriptive qualitative was appropriate for this study because it took particular problems to be examined at the time the research was conducted. The problems which became the focus of this study were the challenges and futures of implementing ubiquitous learning in teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesian context.

The mode of the data collection techniques was fully online. The researchers conducted online observation and online interview. The data collection was conducted from March 2021 to June 2021 when the mode of teaching and learning process was still

adapting with Covid-19 impact. The process took place in English Education Department at IKIP Budi Utomo, Malang, Indonesia as the researchers taught them. However, the students were in various cities in Indonesia as they were not able to come back to Malang because of Covid-19 situation. The researchers chose the subjects of the study from two different classes so that the data were reliable. They chose 50 participants, 25 students from each class, and they used random sampling technique. They were chosen because they met the criteria of being higher education students who studied English as a foreign language. More importantly, they became the subjects of this research because they experienced their study through ubiquitous learning.

The procedure of the data collection methods in this research was started with preparing the availability of the participants and also the lecturers so that the teaching and learning process could take place well. It included preparing the teaching materials and the LMS used as the main tool to conduct the teaching and learning process. After that, during the teaching and learning activities, the researchers did an online observation to analyze the behavioral patterns of the students as the research participants in natural and structured circumstances. This step was done to record what challenges that the students might face during the ubiquitous learning. Then, after the teaching and learning process, the students were interviewed online to find out the students' perceptions and ideas regarding the futures of ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language based on their own experiences. In collecting the data, the researchers used field note and semi-structured interview list as the research instruments. The field note involved measuring items of students' participation or attitude in the learning process and problems faced by the students during the ubiquitous learning.

After the needed data were collected, the researchers examined and presented the data using qualitative descriptive method. The data analysis technique adopted the qualitative data analysis (QDA) used by Yunanda (2022) as follows:

1. The first step was data reduction. It included reducing data by summarizing, selecting the main things, taking the focus on crucial things, finding out the patterns with the intention that the reduced data would be conveyed more clearly. The obtained data from the field were quite a lot so that it needed to be recorded carefully and in detail. The huge numbers of data needed to be reduced to make it easier for the researchers to point out the crucial points of the data collected.
2. The second step was data display. The researchers displayed the data to make them understand what was happening better.
3. The third step was verification. In this stage, the researchers focused on the validity and reliability of the obtained data and related them to experts' theories.
4. The last step was conclusion drawing. The researchers finally drew conclusions regarding the challenges and futures of ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language.

Result and Discussion

The finding of this research which answered the first research question regarding the challenges faced by Indonesian students in experiencing ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English was shown by the data from the field note. The field note was designed specifically to record the students and teachers' interaction and behaviors during the ubiquitous learning. The details of the points included in the field note can be overviewed in the following Table 1.

No.	Indicator	Description	Percentage
1.	Students were seen occupied by technical problems related to internet connection error	During the three month-teaching and learning meetings, a lot of students faced internet connection technical problem because most of	50%

	the students stayed at places with limited internet access.	
2.	Students were seen facing troubles related to their devices-operating competence	Students often faced troubles in operating their devices which supported the ubiquitous learning namely their laptop, computer, and also cellphone. 30%
3.	Students were seen having problem to manage themselves during the ubiquitous learning	Some students were observed as not being present during the ubiquitous learning and some others did not concentrate in following the teaching and learning process. 20% A few students showed that they did not really into the implementation of ubiquitous learning as seen from their lazy and unmotivated expression and gestures.

Table 1. Challenges in Implementing Ubiquitous Learning in the Context of TEFL

From the research findings referenced from the field note which was filled during the teaching and learning process in the context of teaching English as a foreign language, the researchers pointed out the top three challenges faced by the students in experiencing ubiquitous learning to be the focus of finding the answer for the first research question. The three major challenges are further discussed as follow:

Students Experiencing Technical Problems Related to Internet Connection Error

Out of the total 50 students who became this research participants, 25 students were seen occupied by technical problems related to internet connection errors during three-month period of ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. It was mostly because their places were limited in accessing stable internet connection as most of the students lived in small villages in Sumba Island and some others in small villages in Kalimantan.

As this main problem was experienced by most of the students, it contributed to the poor quality of materials acquisition by the students and the success of the teaching and learning process. This kind of problem was also experienced by Clarin and Baluyos (2022). They concluded that the main problem for both teachers and students in conducting ubiquitous classes was poor internet connection. If teachers and students fail to connect limited by the internet connection, classes may be jeopardized since there will be no teaching and learning process. There should be a link between teachers and students when they were apart in distance and the internet connection can be the link. Moreover, it was hard for the students to afford stable internet connection as they lacked of financial standings so most of them could not afford using Wi-fi connection and used their personal mobile data which was quite expensive for them. This finding was in line with research conducted by Siddiquah & Salim (2017), Wickramanayake & Jika (2018), and Bisht et al. (2020). They agreed that the unreliable internet connection and signal may become one the main barriers for the students in their learning experience.

Students were Having Troubles Related to Their Devices-Operating Competence

Among the total of 50 students, there were 15 of them experienced troubles related to their devices. Most cases happened because they had problems with their devices such

as laptop, computer, and cellphone and they did not know how to solve them. Consequently, their learning process was paused as they lost the connection with the teachers. Their technology competence was limited due to their incompetence in operating the devices and also the incompatible devices. In addition, the teachers and the students were required to use LMS as the supporting tool in conducting the ubiquitous learning which was quite new to them as the LMS was designed to answer the learning need in Covid-19 pandemic era.

The problem related to the LMS was also experienced by the research conducted by Clarin & Baluyos (2022). They stated that gadgets or devices used in ubiquitous learning were equally important as learning materials prepared in conveying the lessons. They added that LMS dictates that the devices used by the students have to be compatible with the system to experience smooth delivery of ubiquitous classes. The devices of information communication technology such as computers and cellphones play an important role in many sectors including education (Carver et al. and Alharbi as cited by Bazimaziki (2020)). Therefore, if the roles of the devices could not be maximized during the teaching and learning process, the students' learning outcome may not be optimum.

Students were Having Problem to Manage Themselves During the Ubiquitous Learning

10 out of 50 research participants were having problems to manage themselves during the ubiquitous learning. There were several indicators which made the researchers considered the students' attitudes were rather lacking during ubiquitous learning. The indicators were recorded with the field note that the researchers used during the teaching and learning process.

First indicator was seen from the failure of making sure that the students were all really present during the teaching and learning process as the students turned off their camera and muted their microphone most of the time in zoom conference integrated with the LMS. It was confirmed that some students were not really present during the ubiquitous learning because when the teacher asked questions to particular students randomly, they did not even answer. This finding was quite contradictive to the statement of Kramarski (2018) who pointed out that teachers must act as agents to introduce and reinforce self-regulation in students' learning experiences. However, the absence of the students in the learning process caused some other problems such as poor materials comprehension and neglect of the assignments. In fact, from the students' presence and assignments accomplishment, the teachers can assess the students' learning progress. Vilanova et al. (2019) supported the finding as they highlighted that monitoring students' progress is a method to evaluate their teaching effectiveness and determine the more informed instructional decisions.

Also, some students were also observed as not being engaged in the teaching and learning process seen from their lazy expression and unmotivated gesture. It showed the students' poor participation in the ubiquitous learning. Some others did not really show that they paid attention to the teaching and learning activities. It was admitted by Clarin & Baluyos that it was quite difficult to sustain students' interests in the learning process because they were away from the teachers. In fact, students' sustained interest may contribute greatly on the learning outcome. Harackiewicz et al. (2016) argued that promoting interest can help students to experience a more engaged and motivated learning. The researchers also noted down that some students showed minimal efforts in being engaged in the ubiquitous learning as they showed lazy and unmotivated expressions and gestures. Bzuneck & Guimaraes as cited by Beluce & Oliveira (2015)

pronounced that uninterested or indifferent students who put up minimal effort in every academic activity, show little interest in improving their knowledge, and are more concerned with only grades are not rare in educational settings. Even, they become a source of concern for instructors' psychologists and psycho-pedagogists.

The research findings from the analysis of the semi-structured interview confirmed several things regarding the prior findings from the field note in observation data collection technique. There was also some additional information obtained from the result of the semi-structured interview. First of all, subject A confirmed that he was often absent from the ubiquitous learning because all of a sudden there was no internet access from the mobile data. Subject B added that she could not continue attending the teaching and learning process because her mobile data was disconnected because she could not afford more internet quota. Subject C testified that he was still feeling jetlagged from shifting from face-to-face learning environment to ubiquitous learning due to Covid-19 pandemic. He had a hard time to adjust himself in absorbing the materials and managing to do the assignments given by the teachers. Lemay, et al. (2021) reported that students experienced high levels of stress and anxiety and some others had difficulty concentrating in ubiquitous learning. They had no enough time to adapt to the change of learning environment and mode from face-to-face learning to online learning. Meanwhile, subject D admitted that she did not feel really comfortable in interacting via video cameras. Research conducted by Bashir et al. (2021) also confirmed that some students were in discomfort being on camera and felt self-conscious and they preferred to remain unseen.

From those research findings, the researchers formulated that the futures of the implementation of ubiquitous learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language if the following points can be compromised. The students testified in the interview that ubiquitous learning can become an excellent alternative to conduct long-distance learning as long as the resources needed can be fulfilled. The resources included stable internet connection, compatible devices or gadgets, and students' competence in operating the technology supports. Some students thought that Indonesian students were not ready to implement ubiquitous learning because the mentioned resources were still limited. Others chose to stay neutral to the implementation of ubiquitous learning in Indonesian TEFL context.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this research, we conclude that there were major challenges faced by students in ubiquitous learning in the context of Indonesian teaching English as a foreign language. We classified that the three major challenges faced by students in ubiquitous learning were technical problems, technological devices competence, and students' attitude towards the learning process. Also, some students testified that ubiquitous learning could be an excellent alternative to study from anywhere and at any time, some others suggested technical readiness to optimize the learning outcome, some others thought that Indonesian students were not ready for the implementation of ubiquitous learning, and few others stayed neutral to the option of implementing ubiquitous learning in teaching English as a foreign language.

The researchers suggested future researchers who put their interest on similar issues will be able to examine the implementation of ubiquitous learning in Indonesia deeper. The researchers sincerely hope that the findings of this study may contribute to future

researchers' reference and also the readers in understanding the challenges and futures of ubiquitous learning in the context of Indonesian teaching English as a foreign language.

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