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BOOK REVIEW: ONLINE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN INDONESIA: LESSONS FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Title	:	Online Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic
ISBN	:	978-623-02-2456-0
Author	:	Didi Suherdi
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Firima Zona Tanjung
Universitas Borneo Tarakan, Indonesia
correspondence: english_zone@borneo.ac.id
https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v25i1.3975
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Abstract

The last two years have forced educators and learners to be digitally-literate or at least adaptable to the digital technology use drastically because of COVID-19 pandemic. This globally challenging condition was then captured and written by Didi Suherdi (2021) and published by Deepublish. *Online Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic* consists of seven chapters. It aims to provide new theoretical and practical insights of English teaching through online mode in the midst COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in Indonesia. This book covers various topics related to the research studies and notions of utilizing ICT as well as optimizing educators' roles in the context of online teaching-learning process. Additional topics are also presented to promote the use of alternative ICT-based teaching models and teacher training in the online setting. Distinctively, this book is recommended for academicians who are concerned about ICT-use and eager to start an initial step to integrate and take advantage of ICT for the resiliency of the education system in the post-pandemic era.

Keywords: English teaching, ICT, online teaching-learning process, pandemic

The pandemic which lasts for these two years has altered all life aspects, including the educational aspect. The conventional face-to-face education system is then considered ineffective due to the widespread threat of SARS CoV-2 virus. Thus, the challenge for each educator from preschool up to higher education level is to provide quality teaching and ensure students get and engage in their learning activities actively. Particularly, a number of efforts have been undertaken to enable the acceleration of technology-based teaching and learning processes. Nevertheless, the discrepancy of sufficient facilities, also the students' and

teachers' readiness to make use of technology, mainly ICT for their classroom activities, is considered as the potential issue that requires an alternative solution. Certainly, the solution can be in the forms of notions and research studies results as presented in the book titled "*Online Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic*".

The book author, Didi Suherdi (a professor of English Language Teaching at Department of English Education, Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia), is a productive academic scholar whose main interest consists of English teaching methodology, students' learning engagement, classroom discourse analysis, teacher professional development and ICT for English teaching. His productivity in writing is also confirmed by a number of published books and research articles in reputable journals. Related to his works, "*Online Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic*" (2021) is the latest published book which focuses on his research studies and notions of significant factors contributing to the educational processes in the online mode. Through this book, his interests are accumulated as the whole package of perspective to offer an effective online teaching and learning so quality education is attainable, especially during the pandemic and subsequently post-pandemic.

The first chapter presents an introduction of online learning and its significance towards the education system in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. The further explanation is also stressed on the transformation of technology integration at school for creating a smart school system. It can be seen from the trend of Learning Management System (LMS) and other tech-based facilities that enable the effectiveness of both teachers' responsibility fulfillment as well as their professional development and students' learning activities in academic matters. Particularly, the implementation of this cloud service is considered as the second or third option in a "normal life" setting since the conventional school system (face-to-face system) is more attainable. However, in this pandemic situation and post-pandemic, this online learning and administration has to be taken as the main priority. Thus, as a consequence, some following issues emerge and need special attention to promote the acceleration and faster adaptation of technology integration in the educational system. The author mentions that encouraging teacher open-mindedness and increasing their motivation to adapt with the new teaching setting that focuses on online system, encouraging students' positive attitude and learning motivation, and the sufficient support system are the fundamental issues which require an attention and collaboration among all stakeholders including students' parents so the successful learning is inevitable to achieve.

The second chapter introduces the 21st century Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN). The chapter starts by focusing on the 2013 curriculum (*Kurikulum 2013* or commonly mentioned as K-13) and use of ICT in teaching-learning process as the endeavour to equip students with 21st century competencies. In relation to TEFLIN and 21st century communicative competence, the author explains that the use of text contributes significantly to students' real communicative experiences in the meaningful daily context. This further leads to the brief elaboration about an approach named Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to teach English. Moreover, SFL-based Genre-based

Approach (SFL-based GBA) is considered as one of the alternative acceptable approaches for English teaching, especially in Indonesia. Not only emphasizing how GBA can be incorporated in the teaching-learning process, the author also states that he develops a model of teaching called MP 3W+3S (3 Compulsory + 3 Optional), which has been a result of modification and improvement from the combination of Process Approach, Genre-based Approach, Cognitive Constructivism and Social Constructivism (Suherdi, 2017). In implementing MP 3W+ 3S, ICT use subsequently plays an important role since it enables students to engage actively in finding relevant resources and to help them learn the language. Next, from the aforementioned standpoint, the author highlights the potential of ICT misuse and the urgency of educating students to utilize ICT safely, responsibly, and successfully.

The third chapter still deals with the aforementioned chapters' topic, namely online teaching. The author mentions some studies in relation to IT use in certain projects and teachers' belief on technology integration. Based on his interpretation of those studies, a discussion about how IT is defined and clarified still requires further investigation to provide an optimum educational service and create a map of teaching for students' learning success. Regarding the teaching and learning process using ICT in Indonesia, the author reviews the relevant studies from several scholars. Afterwards, he explains his reason for conducting a research to address the gap in the previous research studies and presents his research results focusing on the readiness of the educational stakeholders (specifically teachers and tertiary academic professionals). Particularly, the context of COVID-19 pandemic is quite different compared to the previous ones. However, an attempt to gain comprehensive, valid, and trusted data is a must. Thus, the author explains the instruments and procedure of data collection employing questionnaires and conducting focus group discussion (FGD) as well as interviews for his research method. In addition, he also displays some related figures to give the readers full access to the research data. As the findings are presented, the author highlights the findings by discussing them per point and inserting some suggestions to provide better education and endorse successful learning for students in the context of online teaching mode. Briefly, the recent research study can be fruitful in the endeavour of mapping the situations experienced by educators in implementing online teaching.

Chapter four discusses a slight information about Synergetic Multilayered Educational Model for Learning Excellence in Industry 4.0 and Disruptive Era (SMEMFLE I 4.0 DE) and the model of teaching Synergetic Multilayered English Language Teaching in Industry 4.0 and Disruptive Era (SMELT I 4.0 DE). These two models are developed to promote achieving successful learning. However, it is worth mentioning that the author distinguishes the use of both models in which SMEMFLE I 4.0 DE is applicable for "any educational process" while SMELT I 4.0 DE focuses on English teaching, has four layers, and several stages of implementation (Suherdi, 2021, p. 36). As the educators has to optimize their roles and address English learning needs of today's students, the author provides four layers i.e., ICT Cultivation (ICTC), Self-Regulated Learning Inculcation (SRLI), Transversal Competence Development (TVCD), and Curriculum Subject Matters (CSM) in his teaching model (See also Suherdi, 2019).

The first layer helps the students to be more digitally literate and promotes language learning. The second layer deals with the students' ability to regulate their own paths and develop autonomy in the language learning process. Next, the author mentions the importance of transversal competences development to be included in the third layer as the supportive and intertwined part in completing the two aforementioned layers. Lastly, in connection to the final layer, curriculum subject or in this case, English language teaching will get more positive impacts in its ways to equip students with 21st century skills in general and language skills in particular by its synergies with the three preceding layers. In the closure of chapter four, the author describes the syntax of SMELT I 4.0 DE stages, among which: foundational, building, and enforcement stages.

Chapter 5 presents a further discussion on various teachers' roles in implementing SMELT I 4.0 DE. However, the author starts by explaining how important it is to synergize technology use, character education, learning autonomy and, of course, subject matter in order to create harmony in educational settings so it will implicate daily life activities. Certainly, a serious effort to obtain the best outcome can be carried out through an optimization of teachers' roles since they are the primary agents in the teaching and learning process. The author subsequently continues that there are three roles needed to be done by these primary agents. First and foremost, teachers have a role as designers.

Hence, it is the teachers who have the duties and responsibilities to design lessons by setting up the learning goals combined with the selection of appropriate technological devices and platforms as well as integrating character education to equip students with a complete package of hard and soft skills to face 21st century global challenges. Second, teachers take a leading role as facilitators. In conjunction with this role, teachers have to apply various ways to scaffold their students' learning through synchronous and asynchronous communication and enable them to be successful in English courses by taking the contexts into consideration. Next, teachers take on a role as assessors in the teaching and learning process. However, this role does not automatically stress on the students' language mastery only, yet the teachers also have to reflect upon their own teaching. Sustainable action to assess the teaching is ultimately expected to help students learn the language and not make them score-oriented.

A current issue in relation to language education research in the pandemic context is provided in Chapter 6. The author starts by highlighting the challenges of carrying out research on online learning i.e. the shift of research nature from onsite to online settings, the limited viability to do observation, and feasibility of fluctuating students' participation due to various factors resulting from the platforms or outside of the platforms. As a consequence, some customization needs to be conducted, namely reformulation of research focuses, data collection procedures including the effective and efficient instruments that can assure the quality of research study. In addition, research focuses are discussed from diverse paradigms included, among which: positivistic, interpretive, and critical paradigms. These paradigms, subsequently, are elaborated with examples of relevant research topics in the current condition, even in post-pandemic situations. The last chapter, appropriately titled 'Technology-based Teacher Training', focusses on the importance of equipping teachers with tech-based training sustainably. Particularly constructive are the author's suggestions concerning the

training curricula for teachers by taking their contexts (various class types, among which: Highly-ICT supported (HIS), Fairly-ICT supported (FIS), and Lowly-ICT supported (LIS)) into consideration. Additionally, the author also proposes how to maximize teachers' pedagogical practices using technology in the classroom to encourage students' learning and achieve targeted goals through "well-planned, organized, monitored, assessed, and continually improved" stages in its implementation (Suherdi, 2021, p. 76).

Moreover, the author emphasizes the importance of conducting a complete package of training which highlights synergy, sustainability, and effectiveness to empower teachers in several stages starting from pre-, in-, and on-service. Briefly, pre-service teachers up to in-service teachers are expected to have a strong foundation on their pedagogy, professional, personality, and social competencies that enable them to create the quality of teaching and learning using ICT-based learning and prepare the future generation's readiness for global collaboration and success in life.

Overall, *Online Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia: Lessons from Covid-19 Pandemic* is a thorough overview for online English teaching and applicable research methods in the pandemic settings. Chapters 3 and 7 provide practical examples of research studies corresponding to the current situation amidst the pandemic for novice up to experienced professionals in the English education field. In addition, Chapter 6 presents a practical guide in terms of research focus and data collection techniques for readers to conduct their research studies in different paradigms.

Moreover, Chapters 1-7 discusses consistently the issues to English education, which is how to make students actively engaged in teaching and learning process as well as how to train teachers or teacher educators to become more familiar with ICT use and employ ICT-based teaching due to available facilities. For those who are new to English teaching models may find it difficult to gain a comprehensive explanation about some terms of layers presented in the book, among which ICTC, TVCD, SRLI and CSM. Therefore, reading across texts about the model of teaching being explicated is useful to navigate readers. In conclusion, although this publication portrays the online teaching in Indonesia in midst of COVID-19 pandemic, it represents a valuable contribution to English teaching and learning process as well as language research studies in relation to technology use in both pandemic and post-pandemic settings for global pedagogical and research repertoire in general, the resiliency of language education system in particular.

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