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# Online Learning Media: English Education Department Students' Perspective

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#### Abstract

The use of virtual learning media is now being daily needs since global pandemic appears. All education units must use virtual platforms to run the learning process. This study is aimed to investigate the effectiveness of virtual media platforms used by lecturers from students' perspective, in the teaching and learning process of English education students in Public Speaking subjects. This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative. The study involved university students, conducted at one of the biggest universities in Medan, Indonesia, majoring in English Education. The participants were surveyed through questionnaires distributed through Google Survey. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted to assemble the data related to students' experiences in using certain online media given by the lecturers, both provided by the institutions and other platforms and then analyzed by using statistical count and thematic substance analysis. By their response, Zoom Cloud Meeting is the most effective media in the teaching-learning process, where 79% of them say so. It is followed by Whatsapp, where 41.30% respondents choose it. These findings hopefully will be of great consideration for the researcher and other parties, to apply the chosen media in the teaching learning process, as students expect.

Keywords: effective, perspective, speaking, virtual media

#### Introduction

Since it was declared as a pandemic by WHO on March 11th, 2020, the Covid19 virus has brought many changes to the habit and systems of economic and social



life of society around the world. Almost all countries in the world have started implementing policies of social distancing or even quarantine, in order to save citizens from the spread of the virus which is claimed originated from Wuhan, China.

The policies include the education sector. The number of countries around the world implement education policies, by instructing students to learn and interact from home, with guidance from teachers of course. In Indonesia, no exception, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture, on March 24, 2020 issued Circular Number 4 of 2020 which regulated the application of the study from house (SFH) policy, which explains the mechanisms and learning systems of students from their own homes. Not only for elementary and middle school students, the letter also covers the implementation of higher education students at universities all around the country.

Like it or not, and ready or not, all education units should be able to run the distance learning system, by applying existing media. Schools that already have adequate equipment and technology are certainly very prepared for this policy. However, schools that have not yet the proper equipment and technology, are forced to possess and follow the regulation. For teachers who are familiar with the use of technology, of course this policy will not surprise them. On the other hand, teachers who are too comfortable with conservative teaching methods and are not yet very technologically literate, will experience extraordinary awkwardness.

The ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) is now an essential skill that every educator, educational staff and student should master (Rahman et al., 2016). The government requires the ability to use ICT for senior high school (in Bahasa Indonesia: SMA) or vocational high school students (in Bahasa Indonesia: SMK), through the attachment to the Minister of National Education Regulation number 23 year 2006 concerning Graduate Competency Standards (in Bahasa Indonesia: SKL). One of the competency standards for science and technology subject group that should be mastered by SMA and SMK students based on Attachment of the Minister of National Education Regulation Number 23 year 2006, is to communicate and interact effectively and politely through various means including the use of information technology.

The advance of technology nowadays has become an advantage aspect of language learning at a group of education levels (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). The quality of education sector has been developed through the use of technology. The development are required to be applied in order to fulfill and to balance the needs of this technology approach, in order to make it more advanced.

In this 4.0 era, effects and reactions in education have been brought by technology (Ping & Maniam, 2015). Almost all the students in developing and advanced countries are engaged and friendly with technology in their learning process. Moreover, the role of learning media in the learning and teaching process is an integral part of the world of education (Tafonao, 2018). Learning media is something that can be used to send the message from sender to the recipient, so that it can



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stimulate the thoughts, feelings, attention, and interests of students to learn (Tafonao, 2018).

Practically, even without the existence of global pandemic, technology should be implemented in all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Every education party should be able to use it, in case the technology has been a daily utility for humans. As a matter of facts, in the teaching learning process, the application of technological devices settings support flexibility and concede challenges and opportunities for both students and educators (Abdulrahman et al., 2018).

In this advanced era, all ages: children, youths and adults alike are demanding acclivity to operating artificial intelligence devices for their daily needs such as for education, information, pleasure and entertainment (Obaidullah & Rahman, 2018). Digital tools, social media, and virtual environments have been extensively used in facilitating language teaching and learning (Amin & Sundari, 2020). Learning media are included in supporting their needs in maintaining the knowledge and information related to studying needs. Learning media with a technology approach should be mastered very well.

The word "media" is derived from the Latin "medium" which means "intermediary" or "introduction" (Mahnun, 2012). Furthermore, media is a means of channeling messages or learning information that the message source wants to convey to the target or recipient of the message. The use of teaching media can help to achieve learning success.

In addition learning media is everything both physical and technical in the learning process that can help teachers to make it easier to deliver subject matter to students so as to facilitate the achievement of formulated learning objectives (Adam, 2015). As well as, learning media has an important role in supporting the quality of the teaching and learning process (Purwono, 2014). Media can also make learning more interesting and fun. One of the learning media that is currently being developed is audiovisual media.

Furthermore, the use of relevant media in the classroom can optimize the learning process (Karo-Karo & Rohani, 2018). For teachers, instructional media help to concrete concepts or ideas and help motivate active learning participants. For students, the media can be a bridge to think critically and act. Thus the media can help the task of teachers and students to achieve predetermined basic competencies. In order for learning media to be utilized properly, teachers need to know their learning needs and the problems students face regarding the material to be taught.

Likewise, e-learning can be defined as a form of information technology applied in education in the form of virtual schools (Basori, 2017). E-learning is the basis and logical consequence of the development of information and communication technology. With e-learning, students do not need to sit nicely in the classroom to listen to every word of a teacher directly. E-learning can also shorten the target



learning time schedule, and of course save costs that should be incurred by a study program or educational program.

Meanwhile, from the students' point of view, the distance learning system seems not difficult for them to be implemented. Especially for educational institutions in urban areas where technology has become a daily need, online distance learning systems are certainly easy to be followed. Particularly students at high levels, the use of technology in the teaching and learning process has become a daily habit.

Without exception in specific subjects in the EFL classroom: Public Speaking subject (this subject is the same with Advanced Speaking class / the name of Advanced Class was changed into "Public Speaking" in the author's institution). The use of technology should be able to achieve the goal of the subject: being able to speak in public. Thus, the appropriate and precise kind of teaching media is required in order to streamline the communication and cooperation between lecturers and students in the teaching learning process.

Speaking subject is a subject that needs more special treatment for the students. Speaking subject demands the students to produce sounds from their mouth. Among all the skills in English learning, speaking is assumed to be the most important skill to be mastered by students in grasping the language (A. Gani et al., 2015). The teaching of speaking skills is considered a required component in the sense of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including in Indonesia, as part of the advancement of the global challenge growth (Amrullah, 2015). Especially in this virtual teaching learning era, teaching speaking effectively is being a special challenge to be defeated by lecturers who are involved.

Thus, this study focuses on the use of online distance learning technology. This study will investigate the effectiveness of media platforms used from students' perspective, in the teaching and learning process of undergraduate English education students in their public speaking class. The research focuses on investigating what type of media or learning application students like best in public speaking class, as well as analyzing how effective the media is from their students' point of view.

## Method

This study is a case study approach that is naturally qualitative. The study involved the students of English Education. This study was conducted at Islamic State University of North Sumatera Medan, Indonesia, majoring in English Education. The participants were surveyed through questionnaires that were distributed online through Google Survey link. The students were asked about their interests and preference in learning by online media during the semester in the implementation of Public Speaking Class. The researcher himself is also the lecture of this subject. This subject is one of the subject that in authors' perception will be hundred percents effective if being taught by face-to-face meeting and training in the classroom.

The questionnaires and interview were conducted to assemble the data related to students' and experiences and involvement in using certain online teaching media



given by the lecturers, both provided by the institutions, or other free or paid applications and webs. In the intervening time, the observation was handled to achieve the data concerning students' participation in teaching and learning activities with their lecturers. The data collected in this study then were inspected out by using two methods; statistical count for quantitative data related students' experiences and involvement in using certain online teaching media given by the lecturers, and particular substances analysis for qualitative data related to students' perspective on the applications' effectiveness.

## **Participants**

137 students from one university participated. The participants' distribution was 137 from Islamic State University of North Sumatera (UINSU), consisting of 4 classes. All the participants were in third grade.

## **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed by using percentage calculation. After the participants filled up the survey, the data were then classified according to its origin. The calculation machine directly converts the result of survey into chart and table.

## Findings and Discussion Online Class vs Room Class

Firstly, the students were asked, what kind of studying they prefer the most: online class or meeting class (conventional meeting). This question was set to see how ready the students are in implementing online class. Surprisingly, almost all the participants prefer meeting class as the best method in studying, where 93.4% of them chose so. Only 6.6% of the students choose online class as the studying method.

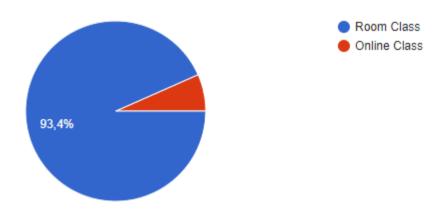


Figure 1. Students Preference between Online Class vs Meeting Class



This data were achieved right after the implementation of their institution management policy, that since pandemic extended in North Sumatera (March 2020), all the teaching-learning process must be applied in an online method. Thus, the lecturers used some online learning media in teaching their class.

This data indicate that the students still feel comfortable with face-to-face meetings. Although some lectures have applied an E-learning method (in 30% of the learning process, as institution policy), the students have not experienced a full learning process through virtual media. E-learning method only became an additional platform to support face-to-face meetings. Thus, the students feel clumsy and not hundred percent ready for a total virtual meeting.

This fact is little different with the instigation given by the government. It is suggested that whole education units and students should be able to apply technology in teaching-learning process, like or dislike. Technology has advanced to the point where it is now an advantageous aspect of language learning at a variety of educational levels (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). The quality of education has improved as a result of the use of technology. To make this technology approach more advanced, development must be applied in order to meet and balance the needs of this technology approach.

Furthermore, the respondents were not only asked their preference, but also being interviewed related to their responses. Some questions related to their preferences were also asked. On method of meeting preferences, the respondents prefer meeting class to online class, due to its effectiveness. They explained that by room class, they can directly ask the lecturer if they still do not understand. Moreover, the stability of the internet access also affects their preference. Here are some responses related to the matter. Students have almost similar reasons why they prefer face-to-face class to online class.

## Students 1

"I think learning in the class more comfortable and effective, because I feel comfort when we learn in class, and when we learn in class we can make a discussion with our friend and we can learn more serious and also we can get more knowledge when we learn in class"

## Students 2

"Because in my opinion online learning is very ineffective, besides not being able to fully understand the lesson, bad signals, and sometimes it also becomes a burden for students who have to spend money to buy internet quota"

## Students 3

"Well we know that classroom is the important component in teaching and learning, and also students and teacher/lecturer. In this situation impossible for us to do the process if teaching and learning in room class. But, I think all if the students agree that study in the class better than by online class. Why? Because we never ready to do it, in Indonesia study from home is not effective. For Students



university study from home not make they feel better, moreover they feel stress because some lecturer give us so many task without clear explanation. It means that the burden explanation and task is not balance, and some lecture give us task without seeing our psychological condition. If we do the teaching learning process in the class it make us feel not boring, not too stress, and we can understand the material better. Because we can control the attention of students in the class. We do not like study from home because we feel a loss in terms of learning material, need a high connection and data."

## Students 4

"By studying in the Room Class I can focus more on learning and my mind can focus on the room, it makes it easier for me to understand the learning material. But if through online class my mind is mixed and I cannot focus on taking lessons, and also other problems such as the network required for online class makes the situation so bad because in my village the network is not so good"

## Students 5

"The class that I like the most is the Meeting class (in room) because it's more efficient in my opinion. From the Meeting Class (in room) the teacher can know the characteristics of each student. Students can ask directly if something is not understood. And also not charged by internet quota. Because using all online classes is very dependent on the internet, if the network is slow or difficult to signal then the learning process will be left behind especially if it includes a college exam."

## Students 6

"Because I feel learning in the room is more effective for me than online classes, because online classes really need or drain money to buy internet data, and online classes also make us learn not to be too enthusiastic and serious. Well, if we learn in the classroom we can interact well, and can face to face with friends and lecturers. The intention is less effective here is because not all network students in the village are good, therefore I hope that quickly learn quickly in the classroom, this online class also makes students confused because more and more assignments are given, it should ease the task rather than burdensome instead."

From their responses, researcher could conclude some reasons why the students would like to have a meeting class rather than an online class. Reason number one is the internet quota. It is known that the online learning platform needs



the internet to be accessible, meanwhile not all students have wi-fi in their houses. Students access the platform through their mobile phone which consumes much and expensive internet data, especially virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom Cloud and Google Meet. When they buy the package, it only can be used for some virtual meetings with the lecturers. In students' perspective, internet package is very expensive, so they or their parents need more money to buy.

Moreover, reason number two is the chance to have discussions with their mates. In virtual meetings, they cannot have direct discussion with their friends and their lecturers. The respondents cannot share their opinion with one another related to the materials being learnt. Interaction and communications between their communities cannot be occur, which decrease on of the nature of study: discussion.

Surely, this matter should be considered by all stakeholders. A challenge has been brought by this substantiality, how the lecturers exploit and utilize the learning media and application so the students can surmount this complication. As stated by Tafonao (2018), learning media play an important role in the learning and teaching process in today's field of education. Learning media is anything that can be used to deliver a message from the sender to the recipient in order to stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and interest in learning (Tafonao, 2018). All aspects of the teaching and learning process should incorporate technology. If technology has become a daily utility for humans, every educational party should be able to use it. In fact, the use of technological devices in the teaching-learning process promotes flexibility and provides challenges and opportunities for both students and educators (Abdulrahman et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the third reason is that the tasks given by the lecturers follow virtual meetings. The respondents said that most lecturers only explain the materials in a few minutes, but after that give more tasks and assignments to do. Stress and pressure are experienced by them which cause little frustration, in case the explanation explained by the lecturers could not be understood very well. They need to read additional articles by the lecturers, or even need to find additional references in order to comprehend the materials.

Besides, another reason is the focus of the students. The respondents explained that they cannot focus very well during the virtual meetings. Some obstacles occur which cause them to feel difficult to understand the lecturers' explanations.

Thus, the reasons given by the respondents need to be considered by all education elements. Especially for the lecturers, the obstacles that are faced by the students require more understanding and deliberation. Lecturers need to evaluate themselves and review the method, approach, and explanation given so far have fulfilled the students' needs and volition or not.

## Media Commonly used by the Lecturers

In order to get more accurate data, the researcher started to ask the respondents, what are the applications or webs used by all the lecturers in all subjects. According to the students responses, the lecturers applied various media in teaching. The data below is to show the most usable learning media by the lecturers.



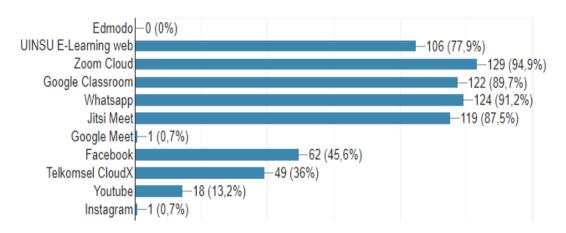


Figure 2. Online Media Lecturers Use in Teaching

By the data, it is revealed that the media mostly used by the lecturers is Zoom Cloud Meeting, where 94.9% students admit it. Then, Zoom is followed by Whatsapp, Google Classroom, Jitsi Meet, and UINSU E-Learning web (this media is provided by institution).

The researcher could confess this fact, in case Zoom Cloud is the most advanced platform to carry virtual meetings between many people at one time. Moreover, this medium is also free and easy to access. In addition, Zoom has no significant obstacles if the users are in a strong internet signal area. Last but not least, zoom users can share supporting teaching learning media such as articles, presentation papers, or even video files.

In different circumstances, Whatsapp is well-mastered by all the lecturers and students. But this medium does not support virtual meeting exceptionally. It is only able to carry virtual meetings up to 8 participants only. This platform is only suitable for open discussion between lecturers and students in a written way. For public speaking subjects, this medium is not effective, especially to perform or to practice the training after the explanation by the lecturers.

## **Students Preference**

Moreover, the students were also asked, what kind of media they prefer the most in the teaching-learning process with their lectures. The data is shown on the chart below.



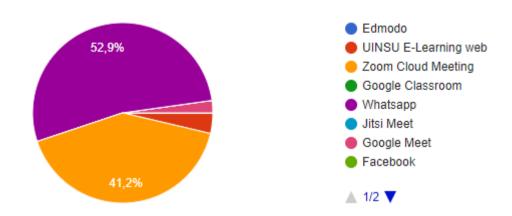


Figure 3. Student Online Learning Media Preferences

By the data, it can be seen that the most dominant media used selected by the students is Whatsapp, where 52.9% respondents choose it. Meanwhile, Zoom Cloud meeting is in second selection, where 41.2% respondents say so.

Various reasons are explained by the students. However, their number one preference is ease of access. This medium does not require much internet data package. Moreover, the platform does not need strong internet connection. Within only a small or low network, this appliance can be accessed very well. In addition, the explanations and articles shared by the lecturers can be reread if they do not understand and can be viewed anytime whenever they forget or need to comprehend deeper.

These students learning needs should be contemplated by the lecturers. Certain lecturers in certain subjects shall deal with this phenomenon, as Whatsapp application is relevant media for them. In case, as stated by (Karo-Karo & Rohani, 2018), the use of appropriate media in the classroom can help students learn more effectively. Lecturers can use instructional media to help students understand concepts or ideas and to motivate them to participate in active learning. For students, the media can serve as a conduit for critical thinking and action. As a result, the media can aid teachers and students in achieving predetermined basic competencies. The lecturers must understand their students' learning needs and the problems they face when it comes to the material, they are teaching in order to effectively use learning media.

## **Most Effective**

Moreover, the students were also asked, what kind of online learning media is the most effective according to them in studying the materials of Public Speaking subject from the lecturers. Here is the result below.



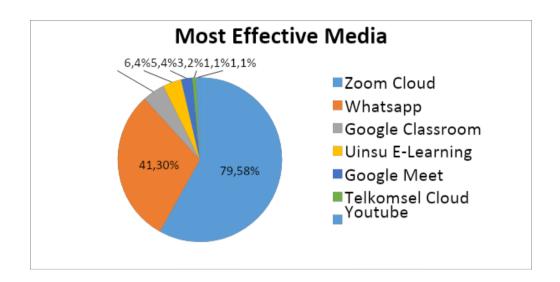


Figure 4. Most Effective Media from Students' Perspective

By their response, it can be seen that Zoom Cloud Meeting is the most effective media in the teaching-learning process, where 79% of them say so. It is followed by Whatsapp, where 41.30% of respondents choose it as the best teaching learning media. Here are some reasons explained by the respondents.

## Student 1

"I choose zoom application because I think I can see my lecture and friends and the lesson about public speaking is important to use this application because basic in public speaking is we are publishing our speech in front of many people so it make practice our speech be better. But not all of the lesson that need to use zoom application such as the task like writing in form report or paper we can use e-learning or Google Classroom I think is matching to send our task from our lecture because our task can send from e-learning application."

## Student 2

"I like the application because it is easy to use and does not require a strong network to enter, in my village the network is not very good but I can still take part in learning through this application, although sometimes I cannot log in because my network is very bad. In addition, through this application we can see and listen to lecturers when teaching material clearly. This application really helped me in participating in online class learning"



## Student 3

"Because zoom cloud meeting is easy to use and to connect with Mobile phone and it can make all students easy to communication and see all of their friends face and when students to share the power point, it can easy and effective to use zoom cloud meeting and all of them who online via zoom cloud meeting can see it. It cannot make the handphone memories full when students share their Assignment/ Power Point."

## Student 4

"Using zoom can make learning process easier and even effective because we can see the face each other, also the explanation who deliver by lecturer become clearer to understand. By zoom, we know all of participants who active/join there and who unactive there. Zoom also have screen sharing mode, it make student easier to understand the topic who deliver by lecturer."

## Student 5

"I like Whatssapp because it is very easy and simple to use. In terms of connectivity, it is very smooth, economical and clear. Already so, for today's era, WA is the number 1 application most frequently opened by humans worldwide, so we can't possibly miss it. But actually, the most effective and efficient is the Google Classroom application, besides being easy to use, saving internet quota, it is also very suitable for use by students with their lecturers as learning media. We can answer and comment on each other both in privacy and class. The sending of tasks is very easy and without obstacles. I am not the type of person who likes "Video Calls" because these applications have a negative impact on my potato smarthpone, unclear sound and broken videos are common problems found in "heavy" applications such as Zoom, Jitsi and others. I do not like to listen to explanations from lecturers in interrupted and unclear voices, so that it will damage the knowledge or information conveyed. Very detrimental!"

## Student 6

"I like WA and sometimes zoom. But the most is WA because is not need many quotas. But zoom and Jitsi Meet also fun because of course we can hold the class with 100 account and we can see everyone faces. Also, the apps is not laggy"

Last, in authors' opinion, this response is the best answer among all responses given by the respondents.

"1) Zoom Cloud is a good application for video call, 2. This application can share anything, as example our file (ppt) 3. we can see a lot of people in the zoom that are lined up to 4. whereas in



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Jitsi only 1 line must be scrolled to the side. 4. This application save our quota 5. We can add many people to our video call 6. There are mute button and off of camera. So, when the speaker present their presentation, we can mute our sound 7. The picture is clear enough."

From the students' perspective, it could be said that Zoom Cloud is the most progressive tool in obtaining public speaking class by virtual meeting between the students. By this platform, the students easily practice the tasks given by the lecturer whereas the lecturer and other students can see directly. With this medium, the students can also share their presentation media while they are performing their speech practice, such as articles, presentation paper, or even video files. Furthermore, this appliance is also free-downloaded and easy to be admitted. Along, if the users are in a strong internet signal area, Zoom does not bring significant hindrance.

It is believed that Zoom is very effective in accommodate public speaking subject. This appropriate and precise kind of teaching media is required in order to streamline the communication and cooperation between lecturers and students in the teaching learning process. Speaking is a subject that requires more individualized attention from students. Students are required to make sounds with their mouths in the speaking subject. Speaking is thought to be the most important skill for students to master in order to grasp the language among all the skills in English learning (A. Gani et al., 2015). As part of the advancement of the global challenge growth, the teaching of speaking skills is considered a required component in the sense of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), including in Indonesia (Amrullah, 2015).

Along these lines, the finding results regarding students' interests and preference in the learning process by online media during the semester underline the implication about the chance potential of the mentioned application to be accommodated officially into educational implementation by Indonesia government. Considering most students are already engaged and proficient in using mobile phones (where all the applications and web are available in their own mobile phone), it indicates that the lecturers are not required to give them basic workshops or training on how to use the application as well. Moreover, the government needs to prepare certain solutions for the surrounding obstacle aspects related to its usage.

## Conclusion

By the responses given by the respondents, the most effective media in students' perspective is Zoom Cloud Meeting. These data findings hopefully will be a great consideration for the researcher and other parties, to apply the chosen media in the teaching learning process, as students expect in their response. In the implementation, there might be some obstacles. Look upon the obstacles as the



challenge to be defeated in order to create a more powerful and effective learning process.

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