

Students' readiness on language distance learning: Case of translation teaching

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought the disrupt change to education activities; from face to face to distance learning. In large-scale e-learning implementations, both teachers and students face an overload of subject material, making it difficult to adjust to the online context. This qualitative research investigated the students' perception of e-learning implementation from the perspective of translation-course participants. The perception reflected the student challenges that categorized as adaptability to e-learning environment; technical availability and computer literacy; time-management, learning engagement; and self-effort and readiness. A semi structured-questionnaire Google Form that consisted of 19 items was developed to collect the students' perceptions and opinions. The questionnaire distributed and collected online. The data was tabulated, presented, and analyzed statistically. The perception of students on e-learning revealed the importance of improvement on technical support for learning instruction and material presentation, as well as students' self-discipline on learning schedule. The finding of this study was feedback for authors to provide effective teaching by consideration to student's challenges in the e-learning environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupts global education. The social-distancing rule promptly shifted the face-to-face teaching and learning activity to a distance and massive electronic learning. In every level of education, both students and teachers encounter the transition from face-to-face learning in the classroom to distance learning conducted via the internet.

E-learning has been adopted as a tool in the learning process in many international universities worldwide. In Indonesia, distance learning has been introduced for decades and many universities may partly or wholly hold distance learning and e-learning for students with special needs or who are living in remote areas. However, the hits of COVID-19 have brought massive shifts for education institutions in delivering the learning activities to full distance and online learning. Of course, not all of the education institutions well-prepared for this rapid change. In a short time, education institutions should exert a lot of effort to keep the learning process going on. Nonetheless, teaching translation as part of the English as foreign language (EFL)

curriculum quickly transitioned from face-to-face classroom activity to virtual activity. However, the abundant knowledge-sharing on the internet is a quick reference for teachers to seek for colleagues' experiences concerning subject matters over the world.

Gorozhanov *et al.* [1] suggested the basic rules in teaching translation online, ranging from the compliance with the norm of social interaction in the e-learning environment to the adequacy of the communication medium between the teacher and students should be met in general. From the teacher perspective, the expertise on both theories and practices, and technical ability is also a primary factor in online translation teaching activity. Although those suggested factors are challenging, the online learning offers the flexibility and attractiveness for students who are limited to physical class, such as the workers, and at the same time attend the advanced study [2], [3]. As a result, this study looked into students' experiences with the pace of e-learning, as well as their attitudes toward the shift in learning style. The authors use the term e-learning because we use a combination of tools such as e-mail or the messenger application, as well as online course work and instructional video in held distance learning.

The terms of distance learning, online learning, and e-learning may be used interchangeably. For example, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) [4] defines that e-learning is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education. Moreover, it enhances and supports the teaching and learning process ranges from the way students use e-mail and accessing course work online while following a course on campus to programs offered entirely online. ICT also delivers the course materials in various methods, such as video/audio conferencing and those which are internet- or print-based [5]. Furthermore, the specific definition for online learning refer to the form of distance education that delivered synchronously or asynchronously where the primary delivery mechanism is the internet. In synchronous online learning, both students and a teacher participate at the same time, but at separate locations. On contrary, the synchronous online learning not required both the students and teacher present at the same time in any session. The first may use the web or video conferencing, while the second may use a print or electronic-based course or using a learning management system (LMS) [6].

The internet brings a favorable thing for human life. The utmost favorable thing is the internet as a huge reference and library for us to learn. It also a great medium of online education. Numerous investigations on online learning have been reported the advantages and disadvantages of this novel teaching platform. Online learning saves time, costs, and flexible duration, and barrierless space. On the other hand, online learning lack of human face to face interaction, technical, and technology literacy issues [7].

Implementation of e-learning resulted in important impacts on education over the world. Several studies have reported the benefits of implementing e-learning in an educational institution, which are notably important tools for distance learning. The advantages of distance learning for both teachers and students are time and space flexibility. E-learning offers an opportunity for students, especially who lives in a remote area or who are facing the scheduling problem and eliminates traveling time [8]. Because e-learning eliminates the barrier time and space, it is favorable for a part-time learner and the on-job learner [9]. E-learning saves time and money since the learning process can take place at anytime and anywhere. Learners should not travel to a specific location; instead, they should access material multiple times in their current location. Thus, e-learning reduces education costs, such as tuition fees, traveling expenditure, and less effort [10].

As well as the internet is a source of references and education material, e-learning enables unlimited access to retrieve the electronic learning materials. This is not found in the traditional learning environment. In e-learning, learners have quick sources of information on the learning topic and flexibility to choose the topics they interested in multiple times [11]. E-learning encourages and facilitates communication and collaborative learning. It was found to have a positive impact on learners' achievements, notably for silent or shy students [12]. A well-design e-learning allows the learners to have a sense of community, listen attentively to peers, and actively shares opinion among the group [13]. Moreover, e-learning instructors provide more guidance needed by the learners. Online learners indicated that instructor response time to questions was prompt. It is the opportunity for the learner to have more interaction with the instructor, such as asking a question and adequate guidance that benefit students in the learning process. These are the feedback for instructors to provide more effective teaching [14].

Beside the educational opportunities, due to some factors, e-learning posing challenges for learners and instructors [15]. Both learners and instructors face the same challenge when implementing e-learning for the first time. As the general belief, at first, learners and instructors agreed that traditional courses were easier for everyone. Heading the online-method required more effort, especially in developing countries [16]. In general, traditional teaching did not encounter technological issues. However inadequate technical support reported as the main problem in e-learning implementation. The ease of access for learners and instructors is one of the factors that succeeding the online teaching [17]. The very basic technical factors, such as internet connectivity and the stable energy supply, and expertise are the important factor that affects the success of e-learning implementation [18], [19].

Shifting from traditional teaching to online needs greater efforts. For example, the instructor's approach to preparing teaching materials for e-learning differs from the traditional method. The lack of face-to-face leads to difficulty in getting prompt feedback. Moreover, in e-learning environment offer the freedom for learners to choose the time, place, and topic the prefer to learn. It is a big challenge for learners who are weak in self-discipline and lack of motivation. They may jump out from one topic to another and may not find self-accomplishment in the learning process [20]. The lack of self-motivation is influencing the student engagement on e-learning. The increasing rate of dropout is larger in e-learning when compared to traditional learning [21].

Translation as part of foreign language learning gains the benefit from technology both in practice and pedagogy. The use of technology for online teaching and learning of foreign languages has been developed since the 1960s [22]. The current trend shows the increasing of ICT or internet use in translation pedagogy or training. The traditional mainly focused on linguistic and translation competence with a little concern on industry demands [21]. Moreover, in traditional teaching, the internet mainly used to provide topical texts in different languages in translating practice instead of providing powerful tools to support translating and learning [23].

The impressive advance of e-learning software and application greatly influence translator training and pedagogy. The model of the professional course, which is basic for the written translation course, such as modules for structure, vocabulary and open task [1]. Technology offers the easement for translators in dealing with daily activity. It is ranging from post-editing machine translation output, project management integration in computer-assisted translation (CAT) software, as well as crowd translation and cloud-based CAT tool use [24].

In the field of pedagogy, technology enhances the students' motivation and engagement by offers various learning styles to maintain the students' interest, get the learners alerts on activity schedules, distribute the materials and related content [25]. Teaching translation online changes the orientation of learning from teacher-centered to student-centered. ICT offers more practical assignments and creates a collaborative learning environment [26], [27]. Translation teaching naturally helps the learners to mimic the professional translator activity, such as communicate and dealing with clients by actively creating an online presence in the online classroom [2].

Although there is an increase in using technology for foreign language learning, however the implementation of technology is challenging [28], [29]. The challenge in online translation teaching related to technical mastery and time flexibility. A recent study argued that online translation teaching needs intensive interaction between teachers, translators, and learners. For example, both instructors and learners should have the troubleshooting skill in facing the errors during the use of virtual CAT [30]. Another challenge is the lack of face-to-face interaction that requires more effort to be online proactive and presence. The instructor should respond to the learners to maintain online class activity [2].

Concerning the effectiveness of online translation teaching and instructional, more research is required to uncover and understand the factors that are critical to implementing successful online learning [31]. One of them is through the investigation of students' perceptions. Perception is a source of information to investigate the students' daily experiences about the learning activities [32], [33] and the effectiveness of teaching in the classroom [34]. This study aimed to investigate the perception of undergraduate students in online translation courses. Those perceptions are based upon the response to three major factors of investigations: i) To identify the adaptability to the online learning environment; ii) To identify the technical and computer literacy issues; and iii) To identify the time management, learning engagement, self-effort and readiness of students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Setting and participants

This study was conducted in Medan, Indonesia. There were 62 students of an undergraduate program from two universities attending a translation course program as part of the extra-curricular since October, 2019. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, online learning was starting from the mid of March, 2020. The disruption in the learning method changes the students' behavior toward learning, such as presence, engagement, and assignment completion. Thus, a set of questionnaires was developed after two months of online learning. However, only 59 of students (22 males and 37 females) agreed to participate in the survey. The participation of students was voluntary by considering the pandemic situation and the over-load of materials from other subjects since the enactment of massive online learning.

2.2. Data collection, analysis and presentation

The qualitative data-collection techniques were used to gather the students' perception and experience on e-learning. A semi-structured questionnaire that consists of 19 items divided into six categories was administered to participants via Google Form link sharing. Sixteen questions on Likert scales from 1 to 4 (low/bad, average, high/good, very high/good) were prepared to explore the learner opinions and experiences on the three majors factor of the study investigations. Each of them featured with open-questions to allow the students to express their opinion on related-item that may not cover in the questionnaire scales [35]. Three of the questionnaire's items were multiple choices. Those items gather information about the device, platform and students' efforts to improve the e-learning environment and experiences. The responses to the questionnaire were collected in Google Forms. Further, the scores of those 19 items were tabulated into spreadsheets based on each category. Due to the nature of data, the analysis was performed in Microsoft Excel. The results were displayed in tables and graphs. Further interpretations were provided in the section of the discussion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Of 59 participants in this study, 44% (26 students) admitted have had experience in e-learning before. Most of them took the online learning when attending the tuition classes. The result of questionnaire items is shown in Table 1. They are sub grouped into students' adaptability to the e-learning environment; technical availability and computer literacy; and time management and learning engagement, with respective values, are 2.71, 2.61, and 2.56 (based on four ranks).

The students' adaptability to the learning environment is rated on the degree of students to grasp the learning instruction in online media, such as sound, image, video, and conferencing. Table 1 shows that 66% (39 students) find the learning instruction was easy to understand. The average value 2.85 attributed to a nearly good presentation and adjustment of audio and video of e-learning contents. Interaction is one of the parameters of learning adaptability. Of 59 students, 79.7% of students admitted have good interaction with peers. It is higher than the degree of students to the instructor's interaction (35%). The average adaptability to e-learning is 2.71 (based on four ranks).

Table 1. Three major factors of students' perceptions in e-learning implementation

Questions		Frequency and percentage				Mean	SD
Adaptability to e-learning environment		Low	Average	High	Very high		
A1	How easy you grasp learning instruction (sound and digital image or video)	1 (1.7%)	13 (22.0%)	39 (66.1%)	6 (10.2%)	2.85	0.61
A2	Rate the environment to learn (noiseless and minimize distraction)	0 (0.0%)	18 (30.5%)	32 (54.2%)	9 (15.3%)	2.85	0.66
A3	Rate the interaction with fellow students	2 (3.4%)	10 (16.9%)	47 (79.7%)	0 (0.0%)	2.76	0.50
A4	Rate the interaction with teacher	1 (1.7%)	36 (61.0%)	21 (35.6%)	1 (1.7%)	2.37	0.55
Average						2.71	
Technical availability and computer literacy		Bad	Average	Good	Very good		
B1	Rate the quality of internet access in your area	1 (1.7%)	21 (35.6%)	36 (61.0%)	1 (1.7%)	2.63	0.55
B2	The availability of personal internet to access the e-learning	7 (11.9%)	34 (57.6%)	18 (30.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2.19	0.62
C1	Rate your ability to use e-learning platform (Google Classroom)	5 (8.5%)	17 (28.8%)	35 (59.3%)	2 (3.4%)	2.58	0.69
C2	Rate your ability to use e-conference (Zoom and Google Meet)	0 (0.0%)	20 (33.9%)	37 (62.7%)	2 (3.4%)	2.69	0.53
C3	Rate your ability to use Microsoft Word	0 (0.0%)	21 (35.6%)	37 (62.7%)	1 (1.7%)	2.66	0.48
C4	Rate your ability to use Microsoft Power-Point	0 (0.0%)	24 (40.7%)	35 (59.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2.59	0.41
C5	Rate your ability to send/transfer, receive and handling files document	0 (0.0%)	10 (16.9%)	42 (71.2%)	7 (11.9%)	2.95	0.53
Average						2.67	
Time management and learning engagement		Low	Average	High	Very high		
D1	Do you find yourself on time on online-class schedule	0 (0.0%)	24 (40.7%)	27 (45.8%)	8 (13.6%)	2.73	0.68
D2	Do you complete the assignment on time?	0 (0.0%)	38 (64.4%)	14 (23.7%)	7 (11.9%)	2.47	0.70
E1	How much do you enjoy translation course via online-learning	1 (1.7%)	37 (62.7%)	21 (35.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2.34	0.53
E2	Rate the suitability of materials presentation	0 (0.0%)	21 (35.6%)	33 (55.9%)	5 (8.5%)	2.73	0.61
F1	Rate the usefulness of this program online	2 (3.4%)	25 (42.4%)	32 (54.2%)	0 (0.0%)	2.51	0.88
Average						2.56	

Technical availability and computer literacy consist of seven questions. Of 59 students, 61% (36 students) have good quality internet access and 30.5% (18 students) admit the availability of personal internet to access e-learning is high. The perception of the use of the e-learning platform shown 59.3% (35 students) easy to use google classroom, and the use of e-conference is slightly higher, 62.7% (37 students) easy to use e-conference applications. The students' perception of the use of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint shows on a good score, 62.7% (37 students), and 59.3% (35 students) respectively. On the ability to send/transfer, receive, and handling files document, 71.2% (42 students) good at it. Thus, the average rank of technical issues and computer literacy is 2.61.

Time management and learning engagement consist of five questions. There are 27 students (45.5%) find themselves frequently on time on e-learning schedules. However, only 11.5% (seven students) admit completing the assignment on time. Of 59 students, 35.6% (21 students) enjoy translation courses online, and 55.9% (33 students) rate good suitability of online materials on e-learning. Lastly, 54.2% (32 students) admit the usefulness of the program. Thus, as shown in Table 1, the average of students' perception of time management and learning engagement is 2.56 (based on four ranks). Overall, the students' perceptions in e-learning implementation are shown in Figure 1.

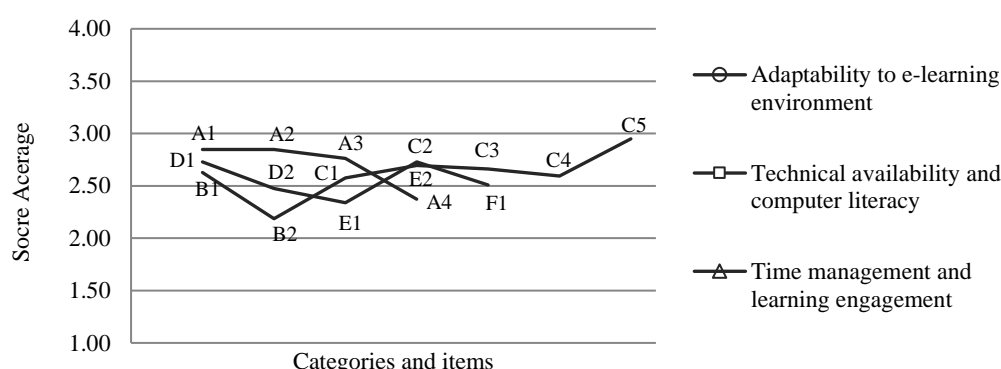


Figure 1. Students' perception of e-learning

Figure 1 presents the overall students' perception. The categories series plotted each question rank between 2 to 3. The highest rank is caught in C5 and the lowest one is B2. The C5 attributed to the ability of students to handling file documents while the B2 attributed to the availability of personal internet to access e-learning. The result of questionnaire item of e-learning devices, platforms, and self-effort and readiness are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. E-learning devices, platforms, and self-effort and readiness

Questions		Perception			
B3	Types of devices used to access e-learning	Smartphone	Tablet	Personal computer	Laptop
		36	7	9	7
E3	Preferred platform in translation course	Documents	Podcast	Video	Conference
		40	15	45	29
F2	Effort to self-readiness for e-learning (multiple choice)	Learning environment	Internet access	Technical skill	Personal discipline
		32	40	35	40

Table 2 shows the types of devices, platforms, and students' effort to get ready for e-learning. Of 59 students, 61% (39 students) use the smartphone to access online translation teaching. The rest use tablets, personal computers, and laptops. Student's perception on the platform shows that 45 students prefer video, 40 students prefer document, 29 students prefer conferences and only 15 students prefer podcast. When it comes to self-readiness for online translation learning, students reveal the efforts to make. Forty students made efforts to have internet access and improve personal discipline, while 32 and 35 students made effort to improve the learning environment and technical skill. Figure 2 and 3 show the use of e-learning devices and platforms, while Figure 4 shows the students self-effort and readiness to e-learning.

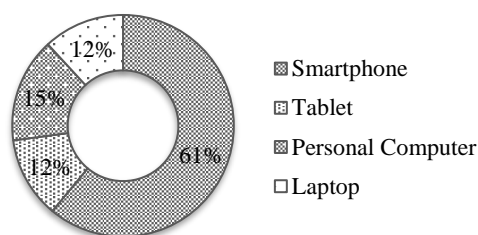


Figure 2. Devices used in e-learning

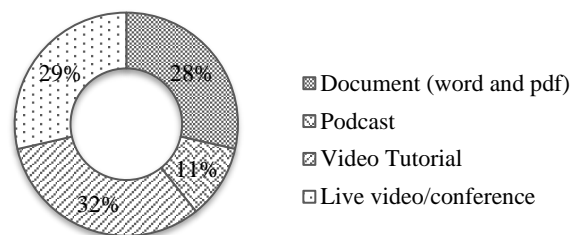


Figure 3. Platforms of e-learning material

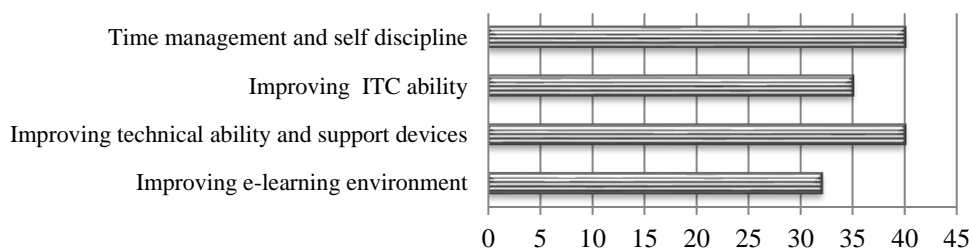


Figure 4. Self-effort and readiness to e-learning

3.2. Discussion

Students' perception of online translation course implementation has been shown in the finding and results. The responses to 16 questions investigation items were ranked from 1 to 4 (low, fair, high, very high). It implies that switching from the traditional classroom and face to face instructor training to computer-based training in a virtual classroom makes the learning experience entirely different for students. The categories of students' perceptions are discussed.

3.2.1. Adaptability to e-learning environment

Usually, adaptation is focused on the students. In e-learning environments, students may suffer from lack of physical communication, the lack of body language, the lack of face-to-face contact that may hinder linguistic, psychological, and social communication with their instructors. The importance and supportive instruction, body language messages, eye-contact messages, and abstract messages can be lost due to the absence of face-to-face interaction. E-learning is more time and resource-consuming because the teacher should provide personal or group guidance instead of giving collective lectures or in addition to them. As Betts [21] argued that the lost-in-translation communication phenomenon may lead to a negative effect on online education, which is associated with student attrition to e-learning.

Students' resistance to change does not allow them to adapt to the online learning environment. Hence, it takes time for them to get accustomed. Thus, types of adaptation to be improved are the interface base, the clear instruction of assignment, ranging from color, size, and content of materials.

3.2.2. Technical availability and computer literacy

Technical availability and computer literacy. The study revealed that the students are not provided with the high bandwidth or the strong internet connection that online courses require, and thus fail to catch up with their virtual classmates. Almost of students use smartphones to follow online translation courses. Their experience in learning becomes problematic because get attention to video or read the materials is exhausted on a small screen. The students who use the laptop and personal computer revealed a better experience on online translation courses and find themselves on time to complete the assignment. Although all of the students were born in the internet age, the results show that the students' ability on a word processor (Microsoft Word and PowerPoint) still in a fair rank. It is contrary to students' ability on handling files or documents. However, most of them are making effort to improve their basic computer skill, and some are commenting that they were aware of the importance of this basic skill today while attending e-learning.

Students with a lack of ITC skill hinder them to access material and complete the assignment on time [36]. Studies have shown that non-IT students need to increase the level of their technological and communication skills to be able to benefit significantly from the opportunities offered by e-learning. In the e-learning platform, students work individually and some of the students need more time to understand the contents, because of the minimum face-to-face contact with instructors [37].

3.2.3. Time management and learning engagement

The result shows the students are lack of time management. Most of the students are not get ready for an online translation course on-time. In the period of the study, people stay at home because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The students who are the workers both work and learn from home. Therefore, the massive online learning may deplete their time and motivation on this program. As Stoessel *et al.* [38] argued, personal factors can also influence student access and participation in the online learning environment, because online courses require a significant amount of time and effort. Thus, a regular reminder would be helpful to remind students of the schedule.

3.2.4. Self-effort readiness to e-learning environment

Self-effort is an important requirement. However, most of the students lack it. From the result of the study, the author assumes that the lack of motivation is related to inadequate devices and internet access. The perception of the platform shows that students preferred video than conference (live video). Students stated that the conferences consume a large amount of data, while video can be downloaded and watched multiple times at any time. In line with previous study [39], students acknowledged in response to an open-question, that a limited monthly budget for internet data is one of the factors influencing their absence from the classroom schedule.

Students prefer to check the material all at once for two weeks or one month of e-learning. This behavior may be problematic, for students will in rush to complete the material and get exhausted at the end of the day. This personal problem may drain their motivation in the future. However, as students commented in an open-ended question and revealed in the sixth question on perception measurement, their positive attitude will help them overcome the challenges in e-learning. Most of the students are aware the self-improvement on personal discipline and time management. They need self-effort to improve the technical availability and suitable device to attend e-learning in a better experience [40].

4. CONCLUSION

Online learning or e-learning reported offers many opportunities as well as challenges. The students who are born in this internet age assumed to be proficient in ICT and easy to adapt to e-learning. However, the study showed that e-learning implementation should consider many factors to get the students and instructors to experience a good learning environment. It is also a must in language teaching, especially in online translation teaching. The students who want to acquire the skill in the translation should have the adequate technical ability on ICT.

In the first implementation of e-learning, students may not able to see the benefit of online translation courses, and especially how the subject matter is going to help students in the real world. For students to become truly engaged in the overall learning process, they have to be aware of how the content is going to translate in real-world settings. Although students aware the importance of self-time management and discipline, they should be prepared with the concise course materials. Thus, it is important to plan and develop the appropriate curriculum and prepare an optimal environment for e-learning, self-study, and improvement in the field of translation. In line with the advancement in information technology, the ICT ability in the translation classroom contributes to the good practices of translation that mimic the real situation. Thus, translation instructors should be capable of ICT. Instructors of online translation courses should meet the requirements of e-learning environments, the convenient learning styles, the needs of students-instructor communication, the proper material design, and presentation to cover the lack of physical presence.

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