

The Impact of Covid-19 on English Language Teaching and Learning Process: A Review

Farzaana Abdul Kadir, Saranya Balachandran, Melor Md. Yunos

Faculty of Education Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Bangi, Malaysia

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v10-i2/9741>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v10-i2/9741

Published Online: 24 April 2021

Abstract

This article review focuses on the impact of Covid-19 on English Language Teaching and Learning Process by examining studies published in prominent journals in 2020 and classifies them under three main themes; remote English Language teaching and learning pedagogy, role of stakeholders in English Language content management in different countries and barriers that ESL teachers and learners undergo. This review reveals that (a) synchronous and asynchronous mode and cooperative teaching method are employed in remote learning aiming at learners from rural and urban geographical settings via multiple digital learning platforms and online applications such as social networking sites and Blackboard as delivery tools, (b) roles of stakeholders in education in content management are undergoing changes warranting lesson planning with engagement and learners' autonomy in mind; and (c) challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners. This review on the response towards the impact of Covid-19 in terms of English language teaching and learning processes by countries worldwide will be able to help enhance the response to cater to the betterment of English Language Teaching and Learning process for all the stakeholders in English Language Teaching Content Management.

Keywords: Covid-19, English Language Teaching and Learning Process, remote learning, Role of Stakeholders, Delivery Tools, Challenges

Introduction

The teaching and learning process is an ongoing process for ages be it formally or informally, physically or virtually. At the beginning of 2020, the world was shaken by the fast spread of a contagious virus known as Covid-19. The widespread of the disease results in many losses of life and the work required to fight the virus dramatically increased with an effect on various sectors such as education, business and travel (Hartshorn and McMurphy, 2020). As a result of the virus being declared a pandemic, many countries decided to implement the stay-at-home movement as a way to minimise the spread of the virus (Hartatik and Bia'yuni, 2020). Under those circumstances, the teaching and learning process was interrupted when it took a sudden switch from face-to-face to online learning in most countries affected by Covid-19.

With the rapid evolvement of technology, the English language teaching and learning process moves beyond the classroom whereby the process is designed as such that it hopes

to keep the teaching and learning ongoing effectively. Speaking about effective teaching and learning processes beyond the classroom, a few works of the literature revealed that even though various digital platforms are used to facilitate English language teaching and learning, lack of preparation of learners, teachers and parents (Nurgroho & Atmojo, 2020) and lack of information (Crawford et al., 2020) have become barriers for the process to succeed resulting in reduced quality of the process. To enable the use of technology to the maximum, up-to-date information on the availability of multiple online means that can be used to enhance teaching and learning processes is required. Thus, the success of the English language teaching and learning process shows dependability on the ability to utilise technology to the fullest.

To improvise the English teaching and learning process during Covid-19, other countries' responses should be considered. Crawford et al. (2020) stated that this is the time to work on and collect the best online instructional practice response globally. Additionally, the researchers believe that there is a chance for the expertise and shared resources worldwide to ensure the continuity of education for learners. Therefore, in this review, studies on various countries globally are elaborated. Specifically, this paper reviews the impact of Covid-19 on the English Language teaching and learning process with a focus on remote teaching and learning pedagogy and the role of stakeholders in English Language teaching content management in different countries.

Remote English Language Teaching and Learning Pedagogy

English Language teaching and learning pedagogy entail factors associated with online learning, impacts, practices, instructional strategies in remote learning aiming at learners from rural and

urban geographical settings. Primarily, as for online remote learners, the responses by the tertiary education industry were as excellent as instantaneous curriculum redevelopment, mediocre responses whereby social segregation policies on campus to having completely no responses at all (Crawford et al., 2020). By way of contrast, as for offline remote learners, a different intervention was employed among the learners living in a rural geographical setting whereby the teacher sends the workbooks to learners' houses since they are unable to access the materials online. In terms of instructional strategy, lessons were conducted in synchronous mode and asynchronous mode (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020).

Quality instruction is crucial in determining the success of the English Language Teaching and Learning Process (Yi & Jang, 2020). There are two types of pedagogy discussed prominently: translingual practices and pedagogy and collaborative teaching (Yi & Jang, 2020). Firstly, the researchers have observed that the implementation of translingual orientation has facilitated communication and language learning in a classroom (Yi & Jang, 2020) relating the focus of the specific lesson to the learners' L1. Alternatively, collaborative teaching was suggested to be implemented in two ways taking the learners' L1 into consideration which are native and non-native teachers in EFL contexts (Yi & Jang, 2020) or two teachers of the same field of expertise collaborating to conduct classes together (Hartatik & Bia'yuni, 2020). By the same token, coursebook designers and material developers should incorporate more motivational and self-regulated learning strategies by providing clear, practical examples in future teacher's books in order to use in online classrooms while researchers are encouraged to investigate motivational strategies, reflective teaching, criticism of online classrooms (Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020).

Utilizing multiple digital learning platforms and online applications in the Covid-19 era is a norm that is considered by many to facilitate learning. Digital technology was viewed positively among EFL learners at preschool in Indonesia (Hartatik & Bia'yuni, 2020), a primary school in Malaysia (Chin Nee et al., 2020), an elementary school in South Korea (Yi & Jang, 2020) and universities in Indonesia and Saudi (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020) whereby the instructional mediums used were Learning Management System (LMS), social networking sites, video conference, online learning provider, chat and message, content maker, assessment, video streaming and sharing, and supplementary resources (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020). Adding to this, in Indonesia, the social networking sites used are such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020), WhatsApp (Hartatik & Bia'yuni, 2020), while in Malaysia, Twitter, WeChat, Tumblr and the recent craze among youngsters these days, Tiktok (Nee et al., 2020). Hand in hand with 21st-century learning where learners are expected to be tech-savvy, utilizing social networking sites is a brilliant step to engage learners (Sivagnanam & Yunus, 2020). As an illustration, in Saudi universities using the Blackboard application to learn English language courses helped to make the teaching and learning process among university learners more effective (Almekhlafy, 2020). With regards to this, Yi and Jang (2020) stated that non-real-time YouTube videos were used for EFL teaching and learning in a rural elementary school in South Korea. As a result of these sites being used to perform teaching and learning, learners' autonomy was promoted (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020) and learners tend to project affinity for English language learning via online application (Fatima, 2020). Thus, a variety of online applications and platforms need to be explored so that no matter how long the pandemic lasts, effective teaching and learning can be carried out.

Roles of Stakeholders in English Language Teaching Content Management

The roles of stakeholders in education are undergoing changes in terms of how to manage content that is in line with remote learning to facilitate learning throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

While designing a lesson plan, it was pointed out by Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) that the preference of learners and teachers should not be any presumption. With regards to this, apt support for learners with unique technology needs (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Considering the time constraints in remote learning, the teaching practices of some aspects of the English language should be designed to focus on only a selected aspect of the language. Notably, the goal of each EFL remote learning session is to create higher levels of engagement and foster EFL learners' autonomy (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). For instance, focusing on teaching speaking skill and pronunciation (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020) and motivating a sense of writing among pupils (Nee et al., 2020) leads towards the intended goal. Teachers and learners both play vital roles in achieving a successful teaching and learning process during the pandemic as no doubt autonomous learners are able to learn themselves and be independent, but they are dependent on teachers to be excellent facilitators (Ismail et al., 2020).

Some measures need to be taken to set forth a future of continued monitoring the quality of the learning design where digital support is made available to all learners, without jeopardizing the curriculum merits and academic standards (Crawford et al., 2020). Therefore, to begin with, the government should provide funds for the implementation of Virtual Learning (VT) all over the country (Shahzad et al., 2020). In favour of upskilling teachers' skills in remote learning, policymakers need to readjust the teaching and learning policy (Hartatik

& Bia'yuni, 2020). Consequently, education experts should be appointed to help teachers to upgrade their teaching skill so that they do not only use WhatsApp as a means of delivering online teaching and learning process but also use any other digital platforms (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). Virtual Teaching (VT) should be used objectively on a priority basis (Shahzad et al., 2020). Owing to that, the accessibility of adequate technology needs to be provided to the learners and teachers alike (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020) in order to achieve the ultimate goal of continuous quality learning design without jeopardizing the curriculum merits and academic standard (Crawford et al., 2020). In pursuance of familiarising and identifying problems faced by learners and teachers, a common platform should be provided to share their experience as the paradigm to online instruction is a bigger ultimatum for the learners compared to the educators (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020).

Challenges of ESL Teachers and Learners

The sudden change in the teaching and learning process amidst the global pandemic contributes to a number of challenges faced by English language teachers and learners. Hartshorn and McMurry (2020) stated that the shift from real to virtual itself is a new stressor among EFL learners and teachers living in the United States. In addition, they found that the transition is more challenging for the learners than the teacher. According to Atmojo and Nugroho (2020), English language teachers in Indonesia faced difficulties in designing material and providing feedback. Furthermore, both teachers and learners find English proficiency level of learners (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020) and lack of facilities (Shahzad et al., 2020) challenging. Similarly, Karuppannan and Mohammad (2020) predicted that ESL learners in Malaysia faced challenges in terms of their level of proficiency. This is supported by Bakar et al. (2020) as they highlighted that some Malaysian learners are excellent while some are working hard to break the barrier of their English Language proficiency.

Teaching methods, psychological factors and language skills are some of the other challenges faced by learners in Malaysia (Karuppannan and Mohammad, 2020). Besides, one of the main challenges faced by EFL and ESL learners is lack of digital literacy (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2020). This leads the learners to have low motivation which obstructs the teaching and learning process. By the same token, low motivation of learners leads to a new stressor among teachers in Indonesia (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020). Enough exposure must be given not only to teachers but to learners to ensure effective digital learning. Other challenges faced by learners were financial challenges whereby they were not able to afford smartphone and internet quota, laziness and lack of awareness among EFL learners in Indonesia (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Therefore, measures must be taken to overcome the challenges in order to improve the English language teaching and learning process.

Discussion

This paper explores the impact of Covid-19 on English language teaching and learning process whereby remote teaching and learning pedagogy, the role of stakeholders in content development and challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners are the main focus.

To begin with, remote teaching and learning pedagogy discussed are synchronous mode and asynchronous mode of instructional strategy (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020), translingual practices and pedagogy (Yi & Jang, 2020) and collaborative teaching (Hartatik & Bia'yuni, 2020) as quality instructional methods (Yi & Jang, 2020). While on the subject, synchronous mode should be applied to learners who were able to attend classes at the same

time via the same virtual learning platform and asynchronous mode should be applied to learners who have difficulty doing so as a measure to cater to their learning difficulties. This is a form of differentiated learning whereby lesson delivery caters to learners' needs and preferences. Various digital learning platforms and online applications namely Learning Management System (LMS), social networking sites, video conference, online learning provider, chat and message, content maker, assessment, video streaming and sharing, and supplementary resources (Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020). In the direction of achieving clear milestones within 13 years, the delivery tools chosen are based on learners' access and equity (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013). Secondly, roles of stakeholders in education in content management are undergoing changes. The changes are, warranting lesson planning with engagement and learners' autonomy in mind (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020) ; fund allocated (Shahzad et al., 2020) to set forth a future of a continued monitoring the quality of the learning design with adequate digital support, without jeopardizing the curriculum merits and academic standard (Crawford et al., 2020). Moreover, interactive online tutoring and self-directed online learning as far as English Language instruction is concerned can be achieved by insinuating the recommended ICT models put forward by the Ministry of Education (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2013).

Finally, there are a number of challenges faced by ESL teachers and learners. The challenges mentioned for teachers are psychological (Hartshorn and McMurry, 2020), teaching and learning content design (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020), lack of facilities (Shahzad et al., 2020), and learners' language skills (Karupppannan and Mohammad, 2020). As for learners, the challenges faced are psychological (Hartshorn and McMurry, 2020), learning method (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020), lack of facilities (Shahzad et al., 2020), learners' language skills (Karupppannan and Mohammad, 2020) and lack of digital literacy (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020; Shahzad et al., 2020) which eventually leads to lack of motivation, financial challenges and lack of awareness (Atmojo and Nugroho, 2020). Providing necessary support and training for the teachers and learners will lead to higher quality and success rate of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning amidst the pandemic.

Conclusion

This review reveals the impact of Covid-19 on English language teaching and learning process in different countries with emphasis on three main themes which are remote English Language teaching and learning pedagogy; the role of stakeholders in English Language content management and the barriers faced by ESL teachers and learners. There are some important points discussed. Firstly, the articles generally focused on the interaction in remote teaching and learning pedagogy which are synchronous mode and asynchronous mode of instructional strategy, translingual practices, pedagogy and collaborative teaching as quality instructional methods. Secondly, the various digital learning platforms and online applications used are Learning Management System (LMS), social networking sites, video conference, online learning provider, chat and message, content maker, assessment, video streaming and sharing, and supplementary resources. Thirdly, roles of stakeholders in education in content management are undergoing changes considering all aspects of warranting lesson planning with engagement and learners' autonomy in mind. Finally, some measures need to be taken to set forth a future where teachers and learners can be supported digitally and psychologically, without jeopardizing the curriculum merits and academic standard at the moment while continuously monitoring the quality of the teaching and learning design and delivery method.

Through this review, the stakeholders in education will be able to make changes to smoothen the process of English Language Teaching and Learning during the pandemic. The policy makers and the National Curriculum Development Divisions will be able to enhance the way their respective countries respond to the pandemic by looking at other countries' worldwide response. Besides, the various digital platforms and English language learners' view of the platforms and online application revealed will give English language teachers an opportunity to identify which one is better to increase the engagement of learners and to promote learners' autonomy. Lastly, this review will help the educational institution's administrators to identify the importance of the training given to English language teachers and trainees for better teaching and learning processes. This will enable teachers to train their learners and increase their level of digital literacy.

References

- Almekhlafy, S. S. A. (2020). Online learning of English language courses via blackboard at Saudi universities in the era of COVID-19: perception and use. *PSU Research Review*.
- Atmojo, A. E. P., & Nugroho, A. (2020). EFL Classes Must Go Online! Teaching Activities and Challenges during COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia. *Register Journal*, 13(1), 49-76.
- Bakar, A. Y. A., Ahmad, D. N. A., & Yunus, D. M. (2020). Students' Acceptance to Using Graphic Novels in Learning Literature (L2): A Malaysian Case Study. *Social Sciences, Humanities and Education Journal (SHE Journal)*, 1(2), 43 – 51. DOI: 10.25273/she.v1i2.6626
- Fatima, M. N. (2020). English Language Teaching During the Times of COVID-19-Challenges and Opportunities: A Brief Study of GFP students in Muscat College. *Journal for Research Scholars and Professionals of English Language Teaching*.
- Hartatik, S. F., and Bia'yuni, A. N. I. F. (2020). The Teaching and Learning Practice Performed by Pre-School Teachers During Covid 19 Outbreak. *Journey (Journal of English Language and Pedagogy)*, 3(2), 89-94.
- Hartshorn, K. J., and McMurry, B. L. (2020). The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on ESL Learners and TESOL Practitioners in the United States. *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 2(2), 140-157.
- Ismail, F., Yunus, M. M., & Zahidi, A. M. (2020). Promotion of Learner Autonomy: Beliefs and Practices from the ESL Teachers' Perspectives. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 9(2), 309–317.
- Karuppannan, S., and Mohammed, L. A. (2020). Predictive Factors Associated with Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic in Malaysia: A conceptual Framework. *International Journal of Management and Human Science (IJMHS)*, 4(4), 19-29.
- Khatoony, S., and Nezhadmehr, M. (2020). EFL teachers' challenges in integration of technology for online classrooms during Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Iran. *AJELP: Asian Journal of English Language and Pedagogy*, 8, 1-16.
- Malaysian Ministry of Education (2013). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. Putrajaya: MOE.
- Nugroho, A., & Atmojo, A. E. P. (2020). Digital Learning of English Beyond Classroom: EFL Learners' perception and Teaching Activities. *JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies)*, 7(2), 219-243.
- Shahzad, S. K., Hussain, J., Sadaf, N., Sarwat, S., Ghani, U., & Saleem, R. (2020). Impact of Virtual Teaching on ESL Learners' Attitudes under COVID-19 Circumstances at Postgraduate Level in Pakistan. *English Language Teaching*, 13(9), 1-9.

- Sivagnanam, S., & Yunus, M. M. (2020). Utilizing Social Media in Vocabulary Enhancement among Primary ESL Learners. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(2), 490-498.
- Yi, Y., & Jang, J. (2020). Envisioning possibilities amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Implications from English language teaching in South Korea. *TESOL Journal*, 11(3).