

When no school is open for learning: Does virtual teaching practice meet EFL pre-service teachers' need?

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Submission date: 27-Jan-2022 11:55AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 1749068517

File name: O_SCHOOL_IS_OPEN_FOR_LEARNING_DOES_VIRTUAL_TEACHING_PRACTICE.pdf (379.86K)

Word count: 4385

Character count: 24132

WHEN NO SCHOOL IS OPEN FOR LEARNING: DOES VIRTUAL TEACHING PRACTICE MEET EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' NEED?

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has transformed teacher education programs to shift their academic activities for pre-service teachers. Accordingly, teaching practice are mostly carried out virtually in order to get access to the school learning. This study aims at exploring pre-service teachers' experiences in fulfilling their needs in online classroom instruction during Covid-19 emergency remote teaching (ERT). Five pre-service teachers were involved in this study. To collect the data, interview transcripts and teaching artefacts were analyzed qualitatively. The result of this study show three important points. First, to find out raw model, students' response, school environment and culture, and teaching performance, they were not completely obtained in virtual class. Second, learning process can be carried out effectively if the pre-service teachers and students were supported by sufficient stuffs for doing online. In relation to the platform, there is no single best technology was implemented. Third, pre-service teachers' digital literacy were important to adapt the school policy and to accommodate the learners' situation. In a nutshell, this study implies that the attention in assisting pre-service teachers to face emergency remote situation in their field experience is important to be evaluated.

Keywords: *emergency remote teaching; teacher's need; teaching practice*

Introduction

In response to the spread of Covid-19 pandemic, most of educational institution have decided to implement learning from home. As a result, to facilitate the learning process, online platform, synchronous or asynchronous, should be welcomed by the stakeholders although it is not designed or prepared before. This emergency remote teaching (ERT), indeed, give impact to teacher education program as well, particularly teaching practice activities. The pre-service teachers who have been trained to handle students in the real school or classroom setting are forced to have the skill to teach students in online platform. This experience is believed to become one of important determinants in the success of their future teaching [1].

The principle of teaching practice is basically to introduce pre-service teachers to the real situation of the school and the people there in addition to the implementation of teaching skills in the classroom. During ERT, to fulfill the pre-service teachers' needs that can be used as their inputs later in the real context, the essence of teaching practice is still provided under the control of the policy makers based on the areas' status. Consequently, inequality is found during the field activities among the teacher education programs. In other words, pre-service teachers' needs are not completely available depending on the learners' situation. This is related to their readiness to face students' changing habit in the classroom. Because something unusual is faced during ERT, this calls researchers

to know more about its potential challenges, barriers, and innovations that have been a growing topic recently. Thus, to know the experiences in facing teaching practice during pandemic, the pre-service teachers' perception as the main character in the program is worthy to be investigated deeply. As stated by [2] and [3], the ways to see what they have passed can be from their reflection. The reflection can be explored through various questions, such as giving metaphor and critical incident prompts during the process of teaching practice.

Many studies have reported about emergency remote teaching in different context [4]–[8], but few investigate pre-service teachers' experiences in undertaking teaching practice through the lens of metaphor and critical incidents. [9] in his study found that ERT can decrease the quality of teaching practice program, especially in mentoring process; as a result, limited attention to the success value during the teaching process need more attention. Looking at different view of this matter, this study would concern on exploring Indonesian pre-service teachers' experiences in ERT in relation to EFL classroom and technology use for developing their teaching skill as the primary need in their study. It is expected to give contribution to the innovation in teacher education program as well as the policy maker regarding the enhancement of digital literacy as a part of emerging content courses in their preparation programs.

Research Question:

What are the English pre-service teachers' experiences during teaching practice in Emergency Remote Teaching seen from their metaphors and critical incidents?

Methodology

As a qualitative approach, this study was carried out through interview and document analysis. Five pre-service teachers from different Indonesian

university, particularly state university in east java were involved as the subjects of this study. Five EFL pre-service teachers were involved in this study, 3 male and 2 female. They were from different institution in East Java, and they commonly had approximately a month to accomplish their program, except one pre-service teacher who was selected in international teaching practice in Thailand. She had a-four-month online teaching experience. In this case, she is called PST #5. They all were in the seventh semester when the time data were collected. After completing the consent form, the participants were interviewed 3-4 times during the teaching practice program. At the last session of the practice, they were asked to share their lesson plan as well as other supporting documents to be investigated deeply. As the last step, thematic analysis was implemented to uncover the significant results by applying three steps, coding – categories – themes [10].

Findings and Discussion

The findings were derived from pre-service teachers' transcripts that unpacked two categories, metaphor and critical incidents. Then the two are presented into details in three themes.

Pre-service Teachers' Virtual Teaching Experiences

Referring to the metaphor "Teaching is a journey, not a destination", this study used the prompt to encourage the pre-service teacher express their feeling about teaching in ERT during the interview by contextualizing the sentence into Teaching English in Covid-19 Pandemic is journey. By mentioning this prompt in their story's titles, they focus on telling the reasons behind the mentioned adjective. The results are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Metaphors expressed by the participants

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Participants	Pre-service teachers' statements	"Teaching English in Covid-19 Pandemic is journey" Metaphor
PST #1	Teaching English in pandemic era is a new challenge for today's and future teacher . Why? Because we should use many platforms to do the learning process. In the other hand, this way of teaching can be useful in the future when the teacher can use technology as well as possible.	Teaching English in Pandemic Era is an unpredictable journey
PST #2	One of the aim in learning English "The students can able to use the language". It means that the students have to try in communicating using English. However, Covid-19 disease force us to adapt with a new way in teaching. The minister of Indonesia education make a rules if there is no offline class or face to face learning. It was replaced with Online Learning. It was challenging for us as a practitioners in education. We have to adapt with every condition during the pandemic. For example, we have to ready 24 hours for our students because not all of students have an access to the internet. We must be creative in getting around online learning	Teaching English in Pandemic Era is an unbelievable journey
PST #3	Pandemic has some effects to people's life, including in education field. All educators and students must do distance learning in case to avoid spreading the virus. Teaching and learning through online is really hard. Teachers must re-think about the materials, assessments, and media used which the students can get or use it easily. Of course, the misunderstanding can't be avoided because both teachers and learners don't know the expression and intonation in the text typing by the others. Sometimes, may be the students think that the teacher is only giving explanation, while in fact, the teacher is also giving a task or question. Furthermore, distance learning is also affected on students' motivation in studying.	Teaching English in Pandemic Era is a challenging journey
PST #4	Frustrating if you're not creative and trying a little bit hard for the class and students.	Teaching English in Pandemic Era is a tiring and confusing journey
PST #5	<i>Mengajar di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 sangat mengesankan. Pengalaman ini sangat menyenangkan karena saya mendapat kesempatan untuk mengajar dengan siswa siswi berbeda negara, mendapatkan pengalaman baru yang berbeda dengan pengajaran di dalam kelas. Berkomunikasi dengan guru dari negara lain serta mendapat ilmu baru tentang Bahasa Thailand.</i>	Teaching English in Pandemic Era is a motivating journey

Table 1 show that the five participants have different experiences. This factors can be from the school placement environment, the students, or even from they themselves. One out of five participants did international teaching practice in collaboration with a school in Thailand. The other four schools are in Indonesia.

Technology Applied in Teaching Practice

This part explains the typical technology application implemented by the pre-service teachers to teach during ERT and communicate with the school stakeholders, primarily students, mentoring teacher, institutional advisor. The metaphors they have concluded in their writing is also derived from this impression since almost all of school are closed for direct learning.

Table 2. Technology used during teaching in ERT

Participants	Technology applied in Teaching Practice	Technique	Critical Incidents
PST #1	WhatsApp	Asynchronous	The student did not give responses to the delivered material

PST #2	Video and Google Form	Asynchronous	My students can get a clear example about how the language/expression used in daily context/ specific purpose from the video. Also, the google form helps me to deliver the exercise for the students. Although not all of the students do my assignment.
PST #3	EPub (for Android, Lithium needs to be installed)	Asynchronous	It's very useful and easy to use. I just had to attach my voice recording and explanation video about the material in it.
PST #4	WhatsApp	Asynchronous	Actually, I want to try discord group, but teacher felt more convenient to use WhatsApp group and suggest me use it as well.
PST #5	Zoom	Synchronous	Sedihnya, video terkadang tidak ada suara saat di aplikasikan dengan zoom sehingga waktu terbuang untuk kendala teknis.

Table 2 shows that the application the students are familiar with are not monotonous. Instead of using WhatsApp as the usual communication tool as well as learning media, they also have used E-Pub (Lithium) and Discord in their daily life, and one of them had applied it in the asynchronous learning. Meanwhile, one of the participants has a great opportunity to have a synchronous learning fully for teaching and learning activities. The implementation of the various applications were matched with the students' ability in accessing the online learning. From the application, it can be highlighted that learning technology can be bridged from communication tool feature such as WhatsApp. Although it refers to the simple way of learning, it can be very beneficial for students with low-

techno support. On the other hand, looking at the Table 2, virtual meeting platform could not be implemented during ERT in all of the institutions. To accommodate their expression when using the technology, in the last column, pre-service teachers told their statements about the process obtained from the application.

Remote Classroom Adaptation

Regarding the adaptation process during teaching practice in ERT, this study underlines four significant events, namely First time in the class, social interaction, managing emotions, and perception on the role of technology in teaching. To identify the excerpts mentioned by each participant, please check the content in Table 3.

Table 3. Components in Remote Classroom Adaptation

Participants	First time when teaching English online	Interaction with the mentor/students/other school teachers	Coping with emotions	Result of Adaptation Process Technology in ERT is...
PST #1	I feel excited but also nervous how we can handle the students	All of the interaction always via WA, but sometimes teacher asked us to have zoom meeting once.	Because this is my first time, I have prepared all of what I need to face the student in classroom. But in the other hand I still get nervous even though we do it in online	one of learning parts. Without technology we cannot give interesting way of teaching to the student
PST #2	Actually, I felt so nervous at the first time came to the class, teach the students, and deliver the materials. However, when	Obviously, as the pre service teacher, I became a visitor or a stranger in this school. That is why I have to give my respect for all	It is usual as pre service teacher without any experience in teaching before. For me, manage an emotion is important before we come to the class. I was teach	Something that make everything easy because we can gather different kinds of source of English

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	they can get the point of my explanation, it built my confidence to teach better and prepare the materials well.	person in this school. My mentor (<i>guru pamong</i>) was good in giving the direction about how to teach in VHS and also the other teacher helps us to adapt with the environment. The hardest interaction was the students itself. The condition of pandemic force us to use the mask. It makes us difficult to communicate, or have a discussion together.	in VHS which has different characteristic of students. Start from the students who are easy to cooperate until the students who need a special approach. When I met some students which difficult to follow my class, it makes me angry. First, I can't blame him because I think if there is wrong with my teaching method. However, when I met my mentor, she give me advice. She said if not all students are interested with English, we can't force him to like English subject. I was learn from this problems to be more professional in teaching. I have to use different way about how I teach in the class like that.	materials which can be useful during teaching and learning process. Also, technology is helpful during this situation when we cannot meet each others.
PST #3	It was very excited but nervous at the same time. Teaching in this school is what I had been waiting for so long. Alhamdulillah my teacher advisor was very welcoming and supportive in helping me out.	There was a schedule for us (the pre-serviced teachers) to come to school. My schedule was on Wednesday and Saturday, so I could meet and interact with others in person when I had the schedule to come to school. For students, I just only had the interaction online through WhatsApp Group. I was quite sad because I couldn't meet the students in person.	It was quite affected. There was a time when the students in class didn't give much attention to me, but I kept trying to catch their attention by asking them some questions, or giving them a game.	very helpful for learning English because the students can learn with their own using technology.
PST #4	Shocked, Confused and little bit nervous	I'm glad that the other teachers were very friendly and helpful especially my ' <i>guru pamong</i> ', the students quite active but they usually forgot to send their assignment. I felt nervous and confused at first but as the times goes on it turned into something memorable and not as bad as I thought at first.	I'm tried being professional by ignoring those feelings as much as I can and stay focus to the class and topics even though some of the classes was held online, I woke up early, fetched some breakfast, preparing and checking the material again and then took a bath and dress myself.	perfect, you can literally make a really complex and good way of teaching English if you able to combine many kinds of app/web for your class
PST #5	<i>Saat pertama kali merasa nervous, namun selanjutnya saya sangat senang mendapat pengalaman yang baru untuk mengajar siswa yang bukan dari Indonesia.</i>	<i>Saya berinteraksi dengan menggunakan media Line. Karena perbedaan Bahasa, terkadang terjadi miskomunikasi, namun hal tersebut dapat teratasi dengan memberikan penjelasan melalui Bahasa Inggris.</i>	<i>Untuk menunjukkan rasa senang atau sedih, saya biasanya menunjukkan itu dengan gerak tubuh aau non-verbal communication.</i>	<i>media yang efektif untuk pembelajaran karena siswa siswi dapat mempelajari bahasa Inggris dimanapun dan kapanpun dia berada.</i>

Many aspects can be explored from the practice of ERT. In the context of pre-service teachers, this becomes very informative since they were facing different situation from their first prediction about teaching practice. To relate their experience through metaphor

they expressed and critical incidents happened, integrating first experience, communication process, and emotions seem to be relevant to support the findings. The dynamic process shows the learning phase in the teaching journey.

In this section, to know its relevance with the current issue related to ERT, the results of this study are connected to the previous studies' findings. Before, this part goes to the specific theme found, the contribution of analyzing pre-service teachers' experience through metaphors and critical incidents are big. The critical incidents' role informs two paradoxical side of the pre-service teachers, positive and negative but both of them are in the same underpinning concept of unexpected event that give an important value in their moment [11]. In linguistic section, metaphor can be blended with the pedagogical aspect in term of teacher's feeling in their instruction. Focusing on a journey which can be modified by any adjective depending on the whole impression in the event, this study has presented one of easy ways to introduce figurative language as a reflection of their activity to present knowing, doing, and being [12]–[14].

First, regarding the pre-service teachers' virtual teaching experience, the whole components that becomes the needs of pre-service teachers are not existed. The missing things in the context of pre-service teachers may cover unbalanced portion in developing students' language skill. The tendency to use written communication was found greater than spoken practice [15], [16]. Consequently, the more attention to the content of the written language is expected also to accommodate the model for spoken language skill. Providing supplementary exposure from video as well as teachers' voice messages at least can give inputs to the students on how to speak in English in addition to develop their listening and reading.

The second point deals with technology or application used during teaching practice. When we talk about emergency remote teaching, it refers to two ways of learning, synchronous and asynchronous. Based on the pre-service

teachers' experience, there is no best implementation of the technology. What is so called the best is variation. It depends on the condition from both teachers and students. Variation in online learning also meets challenges. Thus, using only one of ways was not sufficient to accommodate the students' learning environment. For example, when synchronous learning is always implemented like what pre-service teacher did, signal was not perfectly implemented [17]. Therefore, follow up activities through communication tool such as Line in the context of international practicum in Thailand and the use of WhatsApp in the context of local practicum were really supporting. In relation to technology used in teaching practice phase, almost all steps of teaching were done online, namely preparation, implementation, and reflection [18].

Last but not least, remote classroom adaptation is also essential to be discussed. One of the objectives to be adaptable is that to make the pre-service teachers aware of the real condition. This can be similar to the expectation or even far away from the ideal concept. In this step, the pre-service teachers will learn that adaptability can keep the students' engagement in their instruction. strategies applied is expected to facilitate the whole class equally including those that belong to low-resource context [19] To sustain English language skill development, it is undeniable that not all of the skill can be exposed to the learning. [16] found that less speaking skill activities were given during the pandemic. This is in line with this study's findings that students' task tend to be in the written form. This case needs to be evaluated by giving recommendation to use all features of application that enable students to practice the whole language skills comprehensively.

Conclusions

What needs to be pinpointed from this study is that preservice teachers' experiences can be explored through their reflection through metaphors and critical incidents. Regarding to their need, this study reveal that the pre-service teachers' need involve there things, learning to reflect, learning to use technology, and learning to adapt. This implies that as teacher educators, we need to emphasize that teaching is a process that needs dynamic responses and changes for improvement. Unpredictable situation is always existed, including in this pandemic in which nobody knows the ending point of this disease. Through their reflection, it is expected that pre-service teachers keep doing reflection on their best practice in order to be a professional teachers in any situation. Referring to the limitation of this study which involved small scale of participants and two specific area for investigation, guided-metaphor and critical incidents, further studies are recommended to explore more novelties behind this emergency remote situation. One of the suggested topics is about the task focus and feedback given by pre-service teachers. The more investigation on this area will shed light on the effective way to carry out teaching practice during and after ERT.

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