

Students' Experience of Online Interpreting Learning with Native Speakers

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Abstract

Interpreting is one of the skills that is very necessary in global communication. The use of digital technology and web-based technology in interpreting classes has been widely used in Indonesia, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning interpreting is very challenging, especially directly with native speakers and done using e-learning. This research aims to describe the experience of online interpreting learning with native speakers from the student's perspective regarding the problems and advantages of this learning method. This research was qualitative in nature, involving all sixth semester students in the English Literature study program who took Interpreting Workshop course totaling 25 students. Data were obtained through observation and questionnaires. The finding of the study shows learning interpreting online with native speaker has several advantages as well as it has less psychological impact. It is hoped that after finding problems, solutions can be found to overcome these problems and utilize the advantages of this learning method to maximize learning outcomes.

Keywords : *interpreting, e-learning, native speaker*

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on the world, including in the education sector. In Indonesia, it has set new ideas for the teaching and learning process. Initially learning was all done conventionally in face-to-face mode, but then it was replaced by online learning. This mode, of course, also applies to all subjects including interpreting. The interpreting learning process using the online method often called e-learning provides challenges for both lecturers and students. The challenges are not limited to the use of technology, but also how to deliver the material well using the new media and strategies. Interpreting needs good public speaking skills, that need attention and intensive training from the lecturer. Focus, concentration as well as body language are other aspects in the interpreting course. The sudden changes from the conventional mode to the e-learning mode make both students and lecturers learn more and more. Their experience of the

learning process in the difference modes is very interesting to explore. (Fincham, 2016) explains in his research that distance learning or e-learning cannot replace face-to-face learning experiences even though communication can be done through e-mail, Skype or teleconference.

Interpreting can bridge understanding of the meaning of language, from the source language into the target language. It is rendering the idea and information through spoken mode. The interpreter conveys the meaning of the spoken words from one language to another language orally. Many fields of life still need services including business, diplomatic relations, education, and trade both regionally and internationally.

An interpreter functions as the bridge communication between speakers and listeners who use different languages. With the interpreter, both parties have a good understanding of the meaning. Interpreting is generally understood as the rendering of messages, information, ideas, and styles from the source language into the target language orally. An interpreter must have good techniques in memorizing verbal utterances and converting them rapidly, accurately and completely into another language. An interpreter also has proficiency in both languages and cultures, as well as quickness of speech and mind.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, interpreting learning was carried out online using teleconference media such as Zoom meetings or Google Meet. It is felt to be heavier as a lot of distractions during the learning process compared to face-to-face lectures. During online learning, sometimes students do other activities while listening to the lectures. As a result, the focus and concentration are reduced. On the other hand, it is also difficult to teach public speaking, body language, and intonation. (Reyna Vidyantari, 2021) said that in face-to-face interpreting learning, it will be easier for lecturers to teach public speaking and provide feedback regarding posture, intonation, articulation and gestures.

Meanwhile, the presence of native speakers in learning English is very necessary, because when we interpret; we not only interpret the language but also the culture. The native speaker gives the students not only the language skills, and the ability to render the meaning, but also how the culture of the language they are speaking. It gives the students experience speaking to the foreigner that of course will impact the students' psychology. The presence of native speakers will have an impact on the quality of the interpreting results themselves.

For this reason, this research needs to be carried out to find out the problems faced by students during the online interpreting learning process with native speakers and to find out the advantages of this learning process. This study aimed to 1) describe students' experiences in online interpreting learning with native speakers; 2) find out the problems faced by students in online interpreting learning with native speakers; 3) find out the advantages of learning interpreting online with native speakers.

(Reyna Vidyantari, 2021) defined interpreting as a speech translation from one language into another language orally in real time. There are two types of interpreting, they are consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. This statement is supported by (Government, 1997) define interpreting as rendering information and ideas from one language into another language through speaking. Interpreters are concerned with the spoken word. They convey orally the meaning of the spoken word, from one language to another. (Richards & Schmidt, 2010) defined interpreting as rendering oral language that is spoken in the source language into the target language for the benefit of listeners who do not understand both languages. (Ma, 2013) mentioned 4 basic interpreting skills, they are listening skills, decoding skill, recording skills, and re-expression skills. In listening skills, it is stated that anticipation based on topic-specific knowledge and good preparation for psychological conditions regarding to concentration are very important. Effective listening is very important for comprehending the discourse. However, the interpreters may get nervous when they are listening to the speaker's speech. As a matter, getting nervous is inevitable for anyone who is going to interpret. While listening to the speaker, they should have a clear understanding of their identity and try to compose themselves as soon as possible before doing the interpreting job. The interpreters should set up confidence and enhance their spirit to overcome difficulties. The interpreters should learn to listen effectively. To listen effectively needs attention and concentration. Concentrating properly does not mean adopting a certain posture, frowning, and straining with clenched fists, it means focusing on the speaker's speeches. When interpreters hear an idea that is not immediately clear to them or miss an idea in the moment, the interpreters should keep calm and cautious. At this time, the interpreters learn to continually fill in gaps as they listen, refer back on what they have already understood, and understand difficult and unclear points by listening effectively to what is said.

According to Garrison and Anderson (2003), as cited in (Rais et al., 2004), e-learning is a network or online learning that takes place in a formal context and uses a range of multimedia technologies. It is a learning system that is supported by electronic hardware and software either online (synchronous) or offline (asynchronous). Chan et al. (2007) in (Luaran et al., 2014) highlighted that e-learning includes computer-enhanced learning or training which is usually delivered via a personal computer. Learning is delivered by other communication technologies whose methods of delivery include online lectures, tutorials and learning support systems. Effective e-learning is often a blend of methods. E-learning refers to educational processes that utilize information and communications technology to mediate synchronous as well as asynchronous learning and teaching activities (Jereb & Šmitek, 2006) as cited by (Sangrà et al., 2012). Meanwhile, Rosenberg (2001) as cited by (Sanderson, 2002) defined e-learning as the use of Internet technology to deliver a series of solutions that can improve knowledge and skills. E-learning is used by many educational institutions, moreover during and after the pandemic covid-19. Many kinds of online platforms are provided. Learning Management System is also built by education institutions to support the online learning process whether it is synchronous or asynchronous learning process. However, some studies on online learning finding show that the existence of online learning cannot replace the existence of face-to-face learning. (Ucu et al., 2018) stated that e-learning cannot replace conventional learning and the level of student understanding with conventional learning is higher than e-learning.

E-learning may improve access to education and training, and the quality of teaching and learning, and mark the need for higher institutions to maintain competitive advantage in this changing marketplace for students. This has led to the full exploitation of IT in improving the teaching and learning process, while at the same time, delivering educational programs to more students at a lower cost (Peled, 2000 in (Hsbollah & Idris, 2009). This means e-learning may enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Some studies on interpreting, the problems and factors influencing interpreting has been conducted by (Ma, 2013) and (Reyna Vidyantari, 2021). Another study was conducted in using an online platform to enhance the interpreters' performance (Wu, 2023). The result shows the improvement in the professional competence of novice interpreters and ultimately enhances the

expertise of interpreters. Research on online interpreting learning was also conducted by (Ko, 2008) which indicate that students trained by distance mode can achieve a level similar or comparable to those trained in a face-to-face manner in terms of interpreting ability and skills. From the above studies, none of them talked about online interpreting learning with native speakers. The existence of a native speaker is an important part of learning a language as well as a culture. This study will explore the students' experience learning interpreting with on line native speakers as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the strategy.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study was descriptive qualitative. The data were collected through observation and a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions that were divided into 3 categories; students' comprehension, the strength of online learning, and the weaknesses of online learning adopting from (Rawashdeh et al., 2021) using Likert scale (strongly agree=5, agree=4, neutral = 3, disagree =2, strongly disagree = 1). The respondents were all 6th-semester students of English literature department of Universitas Ngudi Waluyo who took Interpreting Workshop course.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaires were administered to 25 students who took Interpreting Workshop course consisting of 3 parts; 1) students' perception of their comprehension, 2) students' perception of the strengths of online learning, and 3) students' perception on the weaknesses of online learning.

Table 1 illustrates that 83.3% of the students are able to relate the theories to the real implementation. It means that they can get the comprehension from the theory given through online. 87.5% of the students can understand the material well. 75% of the students have better insight on interpreting activities, 76% of the students feel motivated to practice interpreting. However, only 33,4% of the students mentioned that they feel the effectiveness of online learning.

Table 1. students' perception on the comprehension

No	Students' perception of their comprehension	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I can relate the theories to the real implementation	0	4.2	12.5	75	8.3
2	I can understand the materials well	0	4.2	8.3	75	12.5
3	I have better insight on interpreting activities	0	0	25	62.5	12.5
4	I feel motivated to practice interpreting	0	4.2	29.2	54.2	12.5
5	I feel the effectiveness of online learning	0	20.8	45.8	29.2	4.2

From the only 33.4% that stated that online learning is effective for teaching interpreting, as a teacher we need to pay attention about it. That conventional or traditional learning is still in the higher position than on line learning. It is in line with (Ucu et al., 2018) that e-learning cannot replace conventional learning and the level of student understanding with conventional learning is higher than e-learning.

Table 2 illustrates that 56.7% of the students agree that they have more flexible time and place for study using online learning. (Luaran et al., 2014) stated that e-learning could provide greater flexibility on instructor-led or self-study courses among students. Only 50% of the students feel that they can communicate to their lecturer more flexibly. It seems that using online platforms actually limit the communication between the students and the lecturers. The time for discussion and giving feedback for students' work is also very limited. Asynchronous learning may give more chances for the students to replay the material in the Learning Management System. However, only 66.7% of the total respondents said that they can do it. For this, we need to discover more about the factors influencing it.

Table 2. Students' perception on the strength of online learning

No	Students' perception on the strength of online learning	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I can study in more flexible time	0	4.2	29.2	54.2	12.5
2	I can study in more flexible place	0	0	33.3	50	16.7
3	I can communicate with my lecturer more flexible	0	0	50	50	0
4	I can replay the lectures anytime	0	4.2	29.2	66.7	0
5	I can participate more actively	0	4.2	25	66.7	4.2
6	I feel my anxiety reduced	0	12.5	50	37.5	0

Table 3 shows that online learning is influenced very much by the internet connection. From the response it is said the success of online learning depends on the internet connection. 62.5% of the respondents stated that they rely their learning much on the internet connection. They can do nothing if there is no internet. Besides the internet, digital literacy also takes a big role. The students focus more on the technology than the content (36.5%). They need to learn how to use the technology before they use it for learning process. 41.6% of feel more exhausted learning on line than conventional learning, as they have to work with gadgets in long span of time. However, learning new technology is challenging for the students. They feel it is good to know. Using on line platform it means learning new technology. Only 25% said that technology is a burden for them. Communication is one of the limitations in on line learning. 50% of the respondents stated that the communication is less interactive and 45.79 % feel bored due to limited activities during on line classes. The application of online learning reduces the educational function for students due to reduced interaction, which results in reduced student learning quality such as lack of understanding of learning materials (Ilham, 2023). Therefore, learning online limit and inhibit their nature as a social learner.

Table 3. students' perception on the weakness of online learning

No	Students' perception on the weaknesses of online learning	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I am dependent on the internet connection	0	0	37.5	29.2	33.3
2	I focus more on the technology than the content	4.2	16.7	41.7	33.3	4.2
3	I feel more exhausted by working with gadgets in a long span of time	0	8.3	50	33.3	8.3
4	I feel more burdened on mastering technology	0	16.7	58.3	25	0
5	I feel the communication is less interactive	0	12.5	37.5	41.7	8.3
6	I feel bored due to limited activities	0	12.5	41.7	41.7	4.2

3.2. RESULT OF OBSERVATION

The finding from the observation during the classes, it is found out that 1) students are less nervous because they don't have to meet and speak directly with the native speaker. Some studies described significant emotional and psychological impacts on interpreters resulting in the development of emotional distress and burnout (Holmgren et al., 2003). 2) students have more time to think and 3) the lecturer cannot see the gestures and body language directly, moreover when the camera is off because of the poor signal.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the students were exposed to e-learning in great deal. This study has also proven that e-learning could provide greater flexibility on instructor-led or self-study courses among students. The main advantage of e-learning is it enables learning at any place and time while its disadvantages are the students may be required to learn the technology used, thus, reducing the opportunities for face-to-face contact among friends. In short, e-learning is an integration of technologies in teaching and learning. It enables students to learn effectively but eventually it is the educators who still need to play their roles and perform their tasks in order for the learning process to happen. Learning with a native speaker is interesting, but learning interpreting on line with native speaker can reduce the psychological impact to students.

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