OPTIMIZING GOOGLE CLASSROOM IN ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has changed the education in many countries including Indonesia. It changes from face-to-face meeting to online learning. Although it is not new, it seems that not all teachers are familiar with it. There are still teachers who feel confused in the early stages of its implementation. Google Classroom is one of online learning platforms that is the most widely used at the beginning of the pandemic. It is integrated with various Google services like Google Slides, Google Sheets, Google Meet, Jam board, etc. Teachers can maximize Google Classroom by using them. Google Meet is effective for face-to-face online learning. Jamboard is helpful for teachers to write or draw on a virtual whiteboard. Google Sheets with www.flippity.net is attractive for games on online learning. www.flippity.net provides many games like flashcards, crosswords, board games, word searches, etc. Google Slides enable teachers to create virtual classrooms with materials, assignments for the students by using Bitmoji virtual classrooms. Google Form can be used to create quizzes or tests. Teachers can maximize the use of Google Classroom so that the online learning will be attractive.

Keywords: *Google Classroom, Online Learning, Google Services, Covid-19 Pandemic*

1. Introduction

The year of 2020 will always be remembered in the history of human civilization. In that year, there was a pandemic called Covid-19 Pandemic that has effected on many fields of human life in many countries. In education, Covid-19 has changed the order of education which was initially run face-to-face, now it must be carried out with online learning to reduce the spread of this virus. Online learning is currently the best solution. Besides, the spreading of the virus can be prevented and on the other hand teaching and learning activities can still be carried out. However, it seems not as easy as imagined.

Online education in Indonesia is not something new. As mentioned by Plt. Director General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), Nizam, internet learning is not new in Indonesia. Online education in Indonesia started in the late 1980s and increased fast again in the 2000s [1]. Long before the Covid-19 Pandemic, Indonesia has introduced this online learning in education to welcome the Industrial Revolution 4.0. However, in reality, not all levels of education units are ready with online learning, such as teacher readiness, student readiness, and schools' readiness. There are still many teachers who have not mastered the technology that is widely used in online learning. Meanwhile, from the students' side, there are still many students who do not have laptops and cellphones that support online learning. From the school readiness, internet services which are very significant in holding an online learning have not been able to reach all levels of Indonesian society. In this article, the writer only focuses on the readiness of the implementation of learning from the teacher's point of view. In this case, like it or not, the teacher must be willing to learn again everything related to technology in learning.

Nowadays learning activities must be in line with the development and socio-cultural changes of the students [2]. It means when the teachers teach in the 21st century, they teach the 21st generation [3]. Currently technology is developing rapidly and occurs in various sectors of life, and one of them is of course education. Nowadays students are very close to technology so it is wise if today's education should also involve technology that has been a part of the students' life.

Today's students are different from those of decades ago. They are digital native, Gen-Z, millennial generation. Today's students are born in a time where technology is present to help in human life, so technology has become part of their lives [2]. While their teachers are digital immigrants, they were born when the technology has not existed before, but now they have to learn and adapt to the technology that was born after [2].

The process of learning today is also different from learning a few years ago [4]. With the development of technology, the learning process must involve technology. This is an effort to bring education closer to the students who are digital natives. Therefore, a teacher must have the ability to use technology in the education such as the use of internet-based learning media.

Technology is currently used in almost every aspect of life, including education. Language training and technology are inextricably connected, which is not a new notion. Over the previous few decades, the usage of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has had a significant impact. According to new research, the usage of ICT in the classroom has provided numerous benefits to both students and instructors [5]. ICT refers to any object that may digitally record, access, change, transmit, or receive information. These include a personal computer, digital television, email, and other such devices [6]. In addition, Nordin et al. state that ICT refers to all digital tools and resources used to communicate, construct, transmit, preserve, maintain, and obtain information [7]. To summarize, ICT refers to the use of technology, specifically the internet, mobile phones, and computers, in the teaching and learning process. ICT allows both students and teachers to access information as teaching resources and to connect with people all over the world.

Ibrahim explains how ICT has transformed the way we teach and learn [5]. ICT elevates education to a new level, where a formerly teacher-centered approach is now one of the student centers. ICT allows for a learner-centered teaching and learning strategy, with teachers serving as facilitators and educators. As described by Ching Yang et al. and Ismanoglou, ICT supplies both teachers and learners with a numerous of resources where learning may be produced jointly through real-world scenarios [5] Technology is an important part of students' lives nowadays, and it may be beneficial if the teaching and learning process incorporates something from the students' lives. Incorporating technology into the learning curriculum is no longer an option; it is a need. It is a useful tool for both students and teachers [8]

E-learning, virtual learning, and web-based learning are all terms used to describe online learning. In general, it refers to a type of learning that is done electronically through the use of a computer and an internet network. E-learning is defined in a variety of ways. According to Abbad e-learning refers to the use of ICTs to provide access to online tools for learning and teaching [9]. E-learning, is the use of information and communication technology in various educational processes to ensure and enhance learning in higher education institutions, and includes the use of ICT as a substitute for traditional classrooms, online learning, or a combination of the two [9].

Given that today's students are very familiar with the use of technology, today's teachers must have the ability to master technology in teaching. This is so that they can adapt to their students environment that have been born and developed in the midst of technology. This is so that students feel that their world close to

technology environment is not left behind in studying. Probably, it can attract the students' impression and interest. At first, the teacher may not notice it, so they continue to teach in a conventional way or without involving technology; as a result the students feel bored and have no interest in the learning process. Involving the students actively in teaching and learning activities is one of the primary functions of teaching and learning in the technological society [10]

An online learning platform is needed to make learning well organize and archive in. There are many online learning platforms both paid and free at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic such as Google Classroom (2014), Schoology (2009), Edmodo (2008), Moodle (2016), etc. From some of these platforms, Google Classroom seems to be a favorite one. Lembaga Arus Survey Indonesia (ASI) released the results of a national survey related to the use of learning platforms used in the implementation of distance learning (PJJ). Based on the survey, Google Classroom occupies the top position for the most used platform during distance learning [11]. It means that Google Classroom is the most widely used online learning platform in Indonesia. This is also supported by many studies on the use of Google Classroom during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Google Classroom is regarded as one of the greatest platforms available for improving teachers' workflow [3]. Meanwhile, the use of Virtual Learning Environments on online platforms, specifically Google Classroom, seems to be in strong request in Malaysian education for conducting teaching and learning during Movement Control Order (MCO) [12].

Google Classroom is a web 2.0 tools-based application introduced by Google Apps for Education in 2014. Google Classroom offers many interesting facilities and applications that can be used in online learning and teaching. Google Classroom makes it easy for teachers to create materials, organize materials, give assignments quickly and even assess them and provide feedback to students efficiently and effectively. Google Classroom also facilitates communication between teachers and students. Google Classroom can also be synchronized with G. Suite services such as Google Doc, Gmail, GCalendar, etc. Google Classroom is accessible to everyone who has Google Apps for Education. It is a free suite of technologies that covers Gmail, Drive, and Docs [3]. Google Classroom consists of some services offer convenience to its users such as Google Drives, GOoogle Doc, sheets, slides and gmail [13].

Google Classroom has 4 main features that support online learning, namely The stream (Forum), Classwork (Tugas Kelas), People (Anggota), Grade (Nilai). Teachers can make announcements regarding online learning on the Stream (Forum). Classwork allows teachers to organize online learning. Teachers can share learning materials, create assignments, take exams, and create questions. In the People section, teachers can see a list of students who are taking online learning. In the grade section, teachers can provide an assessment of the assignments given to their students. Students can easily access announcements, materials, assignments, and grades shared by the teachers in the Google Classroom.

As one of the widely used educational platforms, Google Classroom has been recognized as having several advantages. There are advantages of Google Classroom such as punctuality, flexibility, practicality, learning autonomy, and vast range of resources [2]. Google Classroom has a feature that can detect when students submit assignments or exams late by marking "missed" or late in the student file, so punctuality is very important in Google Classroom. Google Classroom can be accessible at any time and from any location that its members like. Google Classroom's designed learning is not limited to the classroom because learners can access wherever and whenever they want by joining Google Classroom online.

Let alone to access Google classroom is very simple since it is connected to our Google Account. Teachers can publish some

teaching materials, set tasks to students, and post the students' scores so that they can check it in the course right away. Because most young learners engage technology in their ordinary activities, Google Classroom allows them to be independent, engaged, and motivated [14]. Google classroom also promote collaboration [15]. It means students can connect with one another on the discussion forum, which stimulates them to work together more effectively. Instead of its advantages, Google Classroom also has disadvantage. Google Classroom is an internet-based online learning platform, so the unstable internet connection results on slow access on Google Classroom.

As mentioned earlier, there are many studies on the use of Google Classroom in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Iftakhar in Google Classroom: What Works and How? (2016) reports about how the different classes in Daffodil International University applied Google Classroom [3]. Mualim, Ma'rufah, and Sartika (2019) in The Strengths and Pitfalls of Google Classroom Application to Gen-Z Students' Learning Hybridity have a research to find the advantages and the disadvantages of Google Classroom adopted on the reading and writing classes in the IAIN Purwokerto [2]. Sukmawati and Nensia (2019) in The Role of Google Classroom in ELT show that Google Classroom roles in ELT can be seen in the students' discipline in submitting assignment and the existence of students and teacher's interaction on the learning process [4]. Tamin and Mohamad (2019) in Google Classroom for Teaching and Learning in Malaysia Primary School during Movement Control Order (MCO) due to Covid-19 Pandemic: A Literature Review investigate the issues of bringing Google Classroom into teaching and learning among ESL primary teachers, ESL upper primary students, and parents during the Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia [12]. Susilo and Rohman (2021) in Optimasi Google Clasroom sebagai Inovasi Pembelajaran Online di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 show that the optimization of the use of Google Classroom can be used to develop online learning with high result [16]. Putri (2020) in Optimization of Online Learning Method Application through Google Classroom reveals that the most of students in Sulawesi Barat University's English Department were encouraged and pleased with the Google Classroom Application as an online learning technique, particularly in assignment submission, which was regarded accessible and paperless [17]. Another research about Google Classroom is held by Harjanto and Sumarni (2019) in Teachers' Experience on the Use of Google Classroom. They report that in general, teachers thought that using Google Classroom to conduct their virtual classroom was very useful. Teachers, on the other hand, acknowledged that they needed to optimize other features of Google Classroom because they had not investigated all of them, which would undoubtedly enhance their professional development [15]

In this article, the writer discusses how to optimize online learning through Google Classroom by maximizing the use of Google services such as Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Jamboard. The features provided by Google Classroom are very flexible and can be integrated with several other platforms such as Google Doc, Google Forms, Google Slides, Google Meet and many others [15]. As seen, there has not been a research on that topic, so the writer decided to conduct the research. The writer focused on how to optimize Google Classroom by using Google Service.

Google Meet as the latest feature from Google allows teachers to hold face-to-face learning online such as in Zoom Meetings. Google Meet is very helpful in learning that requires teachers to explain the material directly. Jamboard is helpful when teachers need to write or draw on a virtual whiteboard. Google Sheets can be collaborated with www.flippity.net to access various types of games that can be applied in online learning. There are many games on www.flippity.net such as flash cards, hangman, board games, crossword, etc. which can be accessed easily using Google Sheets. Teachers must make games

by taking templates from www.flippity.net and then sharing the link of the game on Google Classroom so that students can access them easily and quickly. Google Slides can be used to create virtual classrooms using Bitmoji classroom. Teachers can create virtual classrooms complete with classrooms, learning materials, assignments, etc. that students can easily access Google Classroom. In addition, there is also a Google Form to make surveys such as questionnaire. It currently can be used to create quizzes or tests in Google Classroom. The writer uses Google services on her Google Classroom platform during the online learning. The writer wants to share experiences related to optimizing Google Classroom integrated with several Google services such as Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Forms, Jamboard.

2. Methodology

This is a descriptive qualitative research. This research was conducted during the online learning of English lectures at the University of Veteran Bangun Nusantara. The data of this research is the online learning process during the semester. The writer observes the online learning process via Google Classroom and records the observations in the observation sheet. The results of data analysis are presented in a narration.

3. Optimizing

This research is the based on the writer's experience using Google Classroom. The writer only uses features in Google Classroom, such as Stream (*Forum*), Classwork (*Tugas Kelas*) in the beginning of online learning period. However, after participating in several webinars during the Covid-19 Pandemic and exploring some YouTube videos about teaching online, it turns out that there are many things that can be done with our Google Classroom by integrating Google services such as Google Meet, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Forms, Jamboard in online learning. Here the writer shares experience of how to optimize Google Classroom by maximizing the use of Google Services

3.1 Google Meet

Google Meet is a video conference like Zoom Meeting. Google Classroom users can hold online meetings with Google Meet. Google Meet is very helpful for teachers, especially when teachers need to give direct explanation dealing with the material. There is a facility of sharing presentation such as share screens in Zoom Meetings. Students sometimes still feel confused about the material that their teachers share on Google Classroom. Instead of learning themselves, perhaps the teachers' explanation on the material via Google Meet is very useful. Teachers can set up online meetings with students by sharing a Google Meet link within Google Classroom. The writer usually creates Google Meet link a few minutes before the online class starts.

At the beginning of online learning, the writer only used Google Classroom without any video conferences. The only reachable online meeting application is Zoom Meeting. However, free Zoom Meeting is only available for only 45 minutes. On the other hand, the students report that some of them are still confused to comprehend the material shared on Google Classroom. They still need guidance from their teacher, so the writer sometimes uses video conference. Finally, the writer uses Google Meet after that.

3.2 Google Form

The writer usually uses Google Forms to conduct assignments and exams both essay and multiple choices test. Google Forms can assess at once if the exam and assignments given by the teacher are in the form of multiple choices and completed with its answer key. This model is very practical for teachers because teachers do not need to assess. For students, this model is also very fun because they can immediately see the results of the exam and assignment. The writer has given assignments and exams through Google Forms for several times.

There are many videos on YouTube that provide tutorials on making questions through Google Forms. The writer includes a video here, https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=QgVsP kasF8g. On the writer's opinion, the use of

Google Forms is very practical. The results of students' work have been recorded automatically by Google Forms and teachers can easily download them via spreadsheets. The spreadsheets consists of students' answers, students' email addresses, students' time of submission, and even students' grades. For example, the writer creates an

assignment related to Modal Verb. After creating questions in Google Form, the writer sends the Google Form link to students via Google Classroom, namely https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQ LSfKFtbK9pchbC_lULgRFxBjt7cJWJeH0xIxXu PuTcQsaWD6wg/viewform.
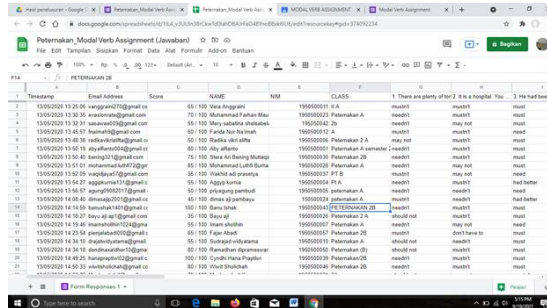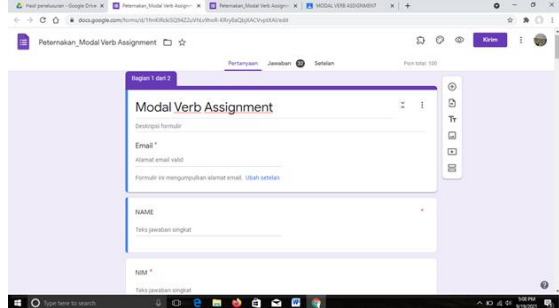
Figure 1 Google Form and Spreadsheet

3.3 Google Sheet

Google sheets in collaboration with www.flippity.net is good to create games for learning English in online learning. There are many types of games that can be accessed for free through Google Sheets such as crossword, hangman, board games, search words, flash cards. As a guide, the writer provides a video link for making game tutorials via www.flippity.net, namely https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=Oysa0j D3ASQ.

During online learning through Google Classroom, the writer several times used games from www.flippity.net in collaboration with Google Sheets, such as https://www.flippity.net/mg.php?k=1e_HdB Nqp40haGXWZIIKNxBI06et5rn-LX8lElN29VRc. This game is a Matching Game.

The writer uses this game to teach Morphology, especially about bound morphemes. Students have to match the word with the bound morpheme on the word by clicking the box provided. If the students can find a word and the bound morpheme as shown in the image below, then the students must double-click the box so that the 2 boxes disappear from the screen. If the students have finished the game, the display appears as shown in the figure 2. This game is completed with a timer. When the students can complete the game they get congratulation as shown in figure 2. Here are some examples of how the game looks from www.flippity.net with Google Sheets.
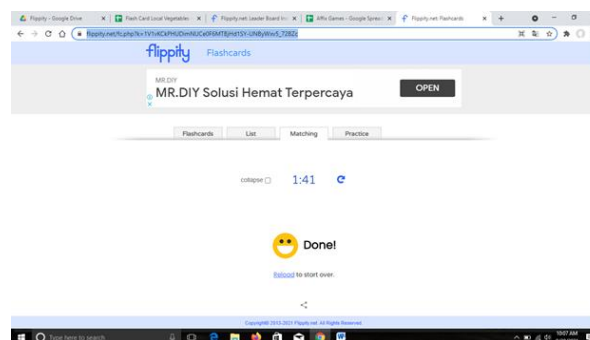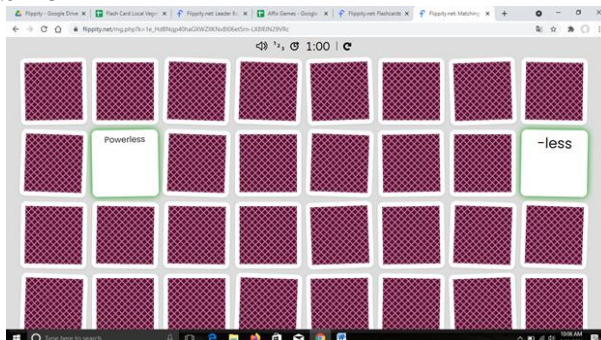

Figure 2. Matching Game on Bound Morpheme

3.4 Google Slides

Google Slides can be used to create virtual classes using Bitmoji Virtual Classroom. The writer has used Bitmoji Virtual Classroom for Screenification (*Ekranisasi*) material in Basic Prosaic Studies lesson. Previously, the writer studied the tutorial for making bitmoji classroom from videos on YouTube, such as at https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=9wVJo BvMN40.

Figure 3. Google Slide

The presentation above is used to teach Screenification (Ekranisasi). On the Google slides above, there are several images with links about materials and assignments that students can click on. Image of a whiteboard consists of things-to-do lists for the students. The bookcase image contains a link to the short story file entitled Town Party Country Party. The television image contains a link to the Little House on the Prairie mini-series video entitled Town Party Country Party. The picture of the couch contains link to assignments that must for the students. Students are quite enthusiastic about this Google Slides model. They can learn independently.

After that the writer tried to make a Bitmoji Virtual classroom, even though the writer has not used a Bitmoji figure. The virtual classroom with Google Slides can be accessed at this link https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1J9 1h95bDV_1Kx74VbTek_5QLDcanu8_vIrL_U6 1Zzdo/edit?usp=sharing. The writer shares the link on Google Classroom so that the students can access it easily. Here are some views from the Google Slides

3.5 Jamboard

Jamboard is a Google service that helps teachers to write or to draw virtually. The writer uses this Jamboard for games in the classroom, especially at the beginning of the meeting. The writer uses a Jamboard to greet each other. After creating a new Jamboard, the writer shares the link and the students start greeting each other. Another use of the Jamboard in the writer's online class is to explain the material. Here are some examples of using the Jamboard;
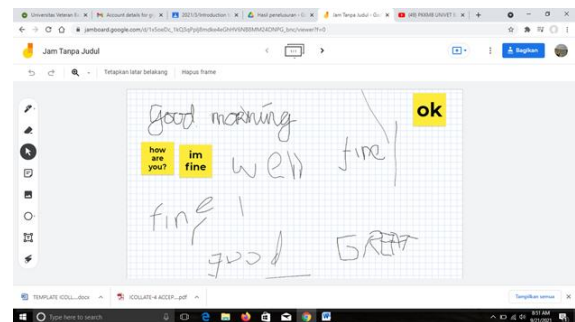

Figure 4. Jamboard

4. Conclussion

Covid-19 pandemic in addition to having a negative impact on human life, it seems that this pandemic also provides blessing disguise that not everyone is aware of. One of them is in education. This

pandemic has resulted in changes in the implementation of education, from face to face to online learning. It makes teachers more literate with technology because even simple online learning still requires their mastery of technology. Online learning requires a teacher to more often access the internet related to online learning platforms, searching for teaching materials, teaching media, distributing teaching materials, giving assignments, etc.

Google classroom still seems to be one of the online learning platforms that is widely used in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. So far, the author has only used the features in it and to be honest, it results in the students' boredom. It turns out that there are several Google services such as Google Forms, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Jamboard that can be used to optimize the use of Google Classroom in online learning. So as a teacher it is highly recommended to update skills related to technology, especially internet-based ones. With skills related to ICT, a teacher can search for learning resources on the internet, create internet-based learning media.

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