

EFL STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON ONLINE LEARNING PROCESS DURING COVID-19 SITUATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Indonesian EFL students faced online teaching and learning in such a rapid process. Therefore, this research was carried out to search for EFL students in Indonesia about their responses on teaching and learning online. This research applied the action research method with the paradigm of quantitative descriptive approach. Data for this research was collected via an online questionnaire, distributed to one class size sample consisting of 32 students in the even semester of the 2019/2020 academic year at one of the private colleges in the West Sumatra province of Indonesia. The data were analysed by descriptive statistics, especially the percentage of each item available in the questionnaire. Findings of this research show that the respondents, or the students, had their evaluation toward the online teaching and learning. The significance of this research is that their responses briefly invite us as scholars, teachers, and lecturers, or scholar-practitioners, to think about the feasibility condition of online teaching and learning, that it should be done contextually and prepared carefully. The Covid-19 pandemic situation has forced students to face double challenges in education: learning the materials in such a digitalized situation and handling external issues emerging while learning online.

Keywords— Covid-19, EFL, Indonesian, Online Learning, Writing Subject

INTRODUCTION

The decision to implement online teaching and learning in Indonesia was primarily triggered by the Indonesian government's decision to stop the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic virus in public spaces, such as schools, colleges, institutes, and universities. The transmission of this virus is known to exist through social interaction, especially the breath (Hoofman & Secord, 2021; Rothan & Byrareddy, 2020). As a result, the implementation influenced the process of teaching and learning in educational institutions in Indonesia. However, it is true to admit that specific training for teachers and students in response to digital teaching and learning is not yet readily available (Vivolo, 2020).

Consequently, disappointment toward the impact of technologies on education is not a new thing, and literature shows few issues on this matter, so it needs to be carefully examined (McAvinia, 2016). In the teaching of English, for example, it becomes even more challenging during this Covid-19 situation (Wicaksono, 2021). Thus, research that specifically addresses this concern is needed from within a learning unit in schools, colleges, institutions, or universities.

Research shows that the use of online learning may invite theoretical/pedagogical concerns, such as the process of learning is partially comprehensible; organizational concerns, such as

educational change based on the institution can happen due to the demands toward technology; and methodological concerns, such as appropriate research methods on measuring the effectiveness of the use of a particular technology is needed beyond the notion of student satisfaction (McAvinia, 2016). It seems that the Covid-19 case influences education in multiple layers beyond what scholars could investigate as this can be noticed in previous research findings. This research answers this problem by performing action research with scientific investigation.

Scientific thinking within the spectrum of scientific investigation is characterized by: 1) empirical observations or data; 2) systematic and deliberate methods; 3) objective, intersubjective, and replicable procedures (Nardi, 2014). This research collected data from reliable sources to provide valuable input to be explored. Method applied in this research is known to be most relevant for scholars involving themselves in education: action research. As such, it is indeed replicable in different occasions and places. Moreover, this research, in particular, follows the area of research in composition studies. It relates to the –questions of pedagogy, and to be specific, it

adheres to the question of –Neo-Aristotelianism and the Positivists— as the form of quantitative researchers—which means that –objective reality can be known through the senses, with the addition of either deductive or inductive reasoning (Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 98). In the notion of composition research, the paradigm of Neo-Aristotelianism and Positivists direct this research into the context of quantitative researchers. Applying this paradigm to this research is helpful in terms of shaping the preferable action research to be performed by a scholar-practitioner.

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to reflect the researcher’s post-teaching by finding out what the students have in mind after studying in online learning mode (L. S. Norton, 2009). This purpose is crucial because, in that way, the researcher can learn important aspects that can be improved further for upcoming classes. Questions that this research was trying to find out are: –What are the students’ responses on the process of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic situation in even semester of 2019/2020 academic year? What can we reflect from their responses for preparing upcoming academic years?!

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (LITERATURE REVIEW)

Research on education or process of teaching and learning during the Covid-19, provide valuable insights. For example, the use of FC in the classroom received a positive response from students (Betaubun, 2021). Teachers and pedagogues were demanded to be flexible in terms of online teaching and learning due to the Covid-19 virus (Carrillo & Flores, 2020; Flores et al., 2021; Francis et al., 2019; Jin et al., 2021; Li, 2021; Martin et al., 2021).

Certain ways to handle this demand to teach online were available, but the ways seem to invite certain barriers among students in the online classroom (Khan et al., 2021). Covid-19 has certainly impacted how English language teaching is performed on a classroom basis (Hall et al., 2021; Ng, 2021; Shi & Fan, 2021), such as the one that happened in I. M. Sechenov University and Al Ain University (Kamal et al., 2021). In Indonesia, Zoom

has become the sole tool for the online teaching and learning process (Mu’awanah et al., 2021), and occasionally, Google Classroom was also used for the process of teaching and learning (Suryani et al., 2021). With the notion of the Appraisal framework, autonomy and engagement of learners during the classroom process are increased significantly (Pasaribu & Dewi, 2021). Online learning might provide several advantages, but this system also has some drawbacks (Lynch, 2004; Osman, 2020).

The understanding context for students’ learning has always been important, especially when the students come from EFL identity as the form of dual-language background (Goldenberg et al., 2011). David Wolff emphasized that dealing with the system of online learning and teaching, it is not for all teachers and it is also not for all students (Wolff, 2002). Pedagogically speaking, recognizing the students’ experiences and their

voices is important for the lecturer to adjust and assimilate their future teaching performance (Bhandari et al., 2021; Manen, 1999). Although the Covid-19 situation influenced the process of education in Indonesia, a large number of teachers, lecturers, administrators, and students in the country have a bigger hope and efforts to reach the better educational outcome with the whole transition from offline to online teaching and learning (Adara & Puspahaty, 2021; Betaubun, 2021; Hamsia et al., 2021; Mu'awanah et al., 2021; Pasaribu & Dewi, 2021; Subekti, 2021; Suryani et al., 2021).

Research shows that teaching online has certain challenges and benefits for teachers in Pakistan and Indonesia, even though these two countries are considered developing countries (Thaheem et al., 2021). Indonesian culture is an oral culture at large. Therefore, online teaching and learning, at some points, influence how culture relates to the teaching of language (Sudarsana et al., 2019), especially writing skills (Andhini & Hamzah, 2021; Choudhury, 2014). Students in Bengkulu, Indonesia, are expected to be able to handle their online process by using Google classroom (Diana et al., 2021); however, the student's motivation and perception need to be taken into account (Ali, 2020; Khrismaninda & Refnaldi, 2021). In Kuwait, for instance, certain changes need to be adapted due to the existence of

the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the situation needs to be pedagogically and administratively overcome (Al-Haji & Al-Senafi, 2021). EFL students' learning barriers and alternatives in using Moodle/Google classroom had also received significant attention from scholars (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2020); yet the process of online learning is indeed more challenging than offline (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2021).

In terms of tools used in the online classroom process, especially in the EFL context, the WhatsApp application has been used tremendously in the process of online teaching and learning in Indonesia and even in Arab countries; however, the use of this application for classroom teaching process does not bring any challenges for teachers and students (Haron et al., 2021; Walidaini, 2021). In comparison, students in China show a positive attitude toward the use of online tools for learning (Xu, 2021). Different from Chinese students, social inequalities are also triggered by the expansive use of digital tools in the online classroom of English and Spanish (Amate et al., 2021). Nevertheless, being adaptive, as research highlights, is demanded in the educational sector (Avni & Lynn-Sachs, 2021; Moorhouse & Kohnke, 2021). By knowing the findings of previous research above, it is clear that research dealing with searching for information on what EFL students in Indonesia responded about online teaching and learning is important.

METHODS

Research Design

This research is categorized into a quantitative research family, with the action research approach, and questionnaire as its technique of data collection (Blaxter et al., 2006). It is known as action research because it was conducted in the college where the researcher served as a lecturer (Lodico et al., 2010). Hence, it is very contextual. It is also classifiable as practical action research because of its practical value (Lodico et al., 2010). The way this action research was carried out was by applying the method of survey research. In the perspective of research on second language learning, or a foreign language learning in this matter, survey research is conducted

to learn about characteristics of an entire group of interest (a population) by examining a subset of that group (a sample) (Johnson, 1992, p. 104). Specifically, this research used the system of web-based surveys (Rea & Parker, 2012) with a questionnaire as the technique to collect the data (Johnson, 1992). This research used a questionnaire with the types of survey questions: 1) list or multiple choice questions; 2) open-ended questions (Blaxter et al., 2006). Responses were coded in this survey research (Andres, 2017; Blair et al., 2014; Nardi, 2014). The collected data from these two types of questions are displayed in the Discussion section of this article.

This research employs dependent and independent variables (Nardi, 2014). The dependent variables are the students' responses about online teaching and learning, while the independent variables are the students' learning itself online throughout the semester during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Therefore, it is important to note that –the revolutionary nature of teacher

research [or lecturer research for this matter] has to do with its emphasis on change from the inside out—from the classroom to the administrationll (Wolff, 2002, p. 173) from the class to the reality. The novelty of this research is that it is, in fact, a teacher-research that indicates a –classroom-based, highly contextualized approachll (Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 108).

The technique of Data Collection and Data Analysis

In terms of collecting the data, this research used an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to 32 respondents that belong to one class in the even semester of the 2019/2020 academic year, or in the early months of 2020. The respondents were students who studied an English Paragraph Writing course with the researcher at a

private college in the West Sumatra province of Indonesia. The questionnaire was distributed online on July 3, 2020, via Google forms (<https://forms.gle/JvvLJHSeFvTBW9aPA>). After distributing the questionnaire to the respondents, the researcher found out the following demographic data (see Figure 1. Respondents' Gender).

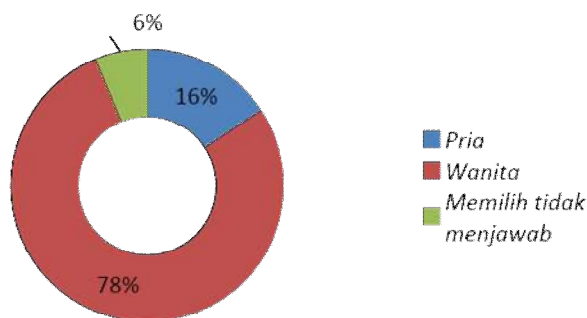


Figure 1. Respondents' Gender

Figure 1 shows the respondents who informed their gender in the questionnaire. It indicates that the respondents were mostly female students, but at this point, gender does not influence the overall analysis of the collected data in the questionnaire because gender is an independent variable in this research.

The following items are aspects that were asked to the respondents in the questionnaire online:

- Students' overall impression on the online learning process;
- Students' satisfaction level on the online learning process on all courses compared to EPW course;
- Students' handicaps in the process of online learning and what they can anticipate;

- Students' suggestions to all lecturers and EPW course lecturers;
- Students' preferences on the percentage of online and offline learning mode;
- Students' impression on the use of YouTube, as an example of an accessible online; platform to store, publish, or share video-based learning materials for the students;

For the ethical part of this research, especially dealing with the respondents' consent, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire voluntarily and they were also informed that there would be no consequences after they filled out the questionnaire in the future (Fowler, 2014). The responses were purely used for this research. Concerning the sampling technique, by definition, –a sample only can be representative of the population included in

the sample frame. One design issue is how well the sample frame corresponds to the population a researcher wants to describe (Fowler, 2014). Three considerations that the researcher applied in selecting the samples: 1) comprehensiveness; 2) probability of selection; 3) efficiency (Fowler, 2014). The sampling strategy for this research is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling strategy (Blaxter et al., 2006), and the sample size determines the sampling error (Blair et al., 2014). To manage the data collected in this research, the researcher applied coding techniques to manage data from the multiple-choice questions and applied labelling techniques to manage data from open-ended questions in the questionnaire

(Blaxter et al., 2006; Nazir, 2014). The collected data are displayed in the form of descriptive statistics (Sugiyono, 2016), especially the frequency distribution table (Nazir, 2014).

In addition to the research design, this research can be classified as quantitative descriptive studies, which means –studies that examine variables with statistical measures and it –allows researchers to describe patterns within data or subjects (Bridwell-Bowles, 1991, p. 105). Findings of this research are in numerical data, or in the form of percentage for each item measured, and in the form of patterns that are discussed along the way in the Results and Discussions section in this article.

The results of this research are displayed in the form of figures and tables.

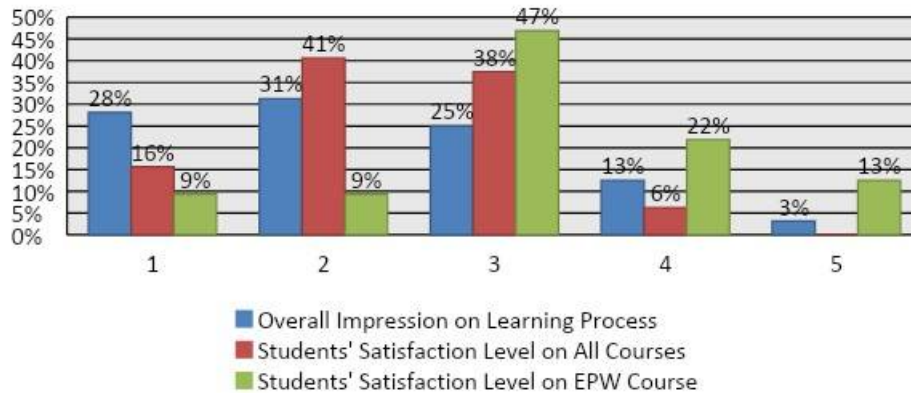


Figure 2. Percentage Measurement on Learning Process and Satisfaction

Note on Range in Figure 2:

- 1 = *tidak biasa (pengalaman sangat baru)* / unusual (very new experience)
- 5 = *sangat biasa (pengalaman tidak baru)* / usual (not a new experience)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1 shows the respondents' preference scale on the online learning process and measurement. The respondents' impression of the learning process overall during Covid-19 was between unusual experience to new experience. They responded that online learning was indeed a new experience but quite unusual for them. Only 3% of the respondents answered the question by saying that it is a common experience for them.

In terms of satisfaction level on all courses, the respondents preferred to put their judgment as closer to not satisfying. 41% of respondents preferred the range closer to not satisfying. Meanwhile, their satisfaction with the EPW course was relatively satisfying, where 47% of the respondents preferred the 3rd option for their answer. This data shows that the students have their ways of determining their impression on the

learning process and their satisfaction with the EPW course compared to all other courses in the given semester. Nonetheless, –what is important about teaching is what it helps the learner to do, know or understand. [...] What we do as teachers must take into account what we understand about how students learn, generally and in our context

(Fry et al., 2003, p. 24). Therefore, this data reflects us that from this point, we can expand the teaching performance onwards for classes in the upcoming semester. Research shows that considering the students' online English learning activities is necessary for the betterment of the classroom process (Liu & Song, 2021).

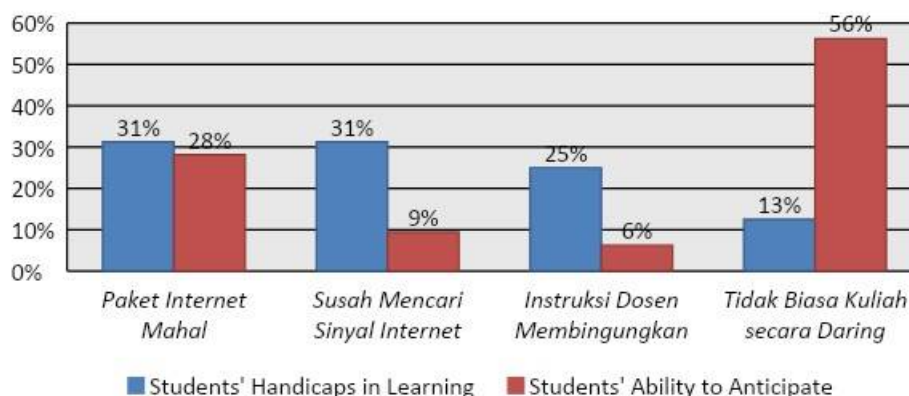


Figure 3. Students' Handicaps and Ability to Anticipate

Notes on Figure 3:

- *paket internet mahal* (expensive internet package)
- *susah mencari sinyal internet* (difficult to search for the internet signal)
- *instruksi dosen mbingungkan* (the lecturer's instruction was confusing)
- *tidak biasa kuliah secara daring* (unusual to study online)

Figure 3 shows four items of the respondents' handicaps during the online learning process. This data is in line with research that depicts that not only students, teachers, or lecturers also face certain handicaps in the process of teaching and learning (Adnan, 2020; Purnama, 2021). In terms of students' handicaps, they responded that 'the expensive internet package' and 'the difficulties to search for internet signal' became the two prominent handicaps faced by them. These two options received a similar percentage. Surprisingly, 'the lecturer's instruction was confusing' received a quarter percent of the total respondents, and the

'unusual to study online' only 13% of the respondents in total. When the respondents were asked about their ability to anticipate the handicaps, half of them were only able to anticipate the 'unusual to study online', while the problem of 'expensive internet package price' could be solved by almost all of the respondents. Two situations that were difficult for the respondents to anticipate: 'difficult to search for internet signals' and 'the lecturer's instruction was confusing'. These two handicaps were closely related to solving the external issues and pedagogical challenges that need further attention from the appointed lecturer.

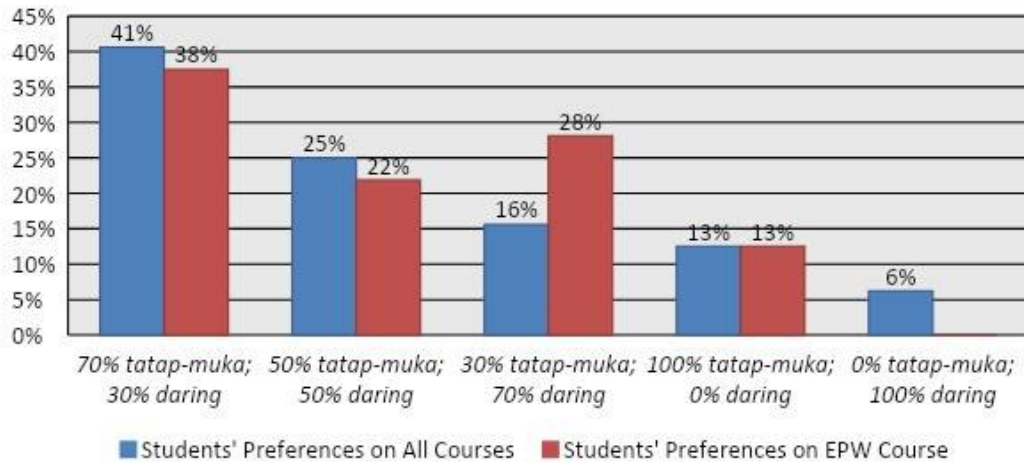


Figure 4. Students' Preferences

Notes on Figure 4:

- *tatap-muka* means the offline learning process
- *daring* means the online learning process

Based on the respondents' preferences, they decided to choose a 70% offline learning process equipped with only 30% online learning process. Almost all respondents answered that they preferred

to study offline more than online for all courses and that also leads to EPW course. This data has shown that the students are still keen on the offline learning format than the online learning format.

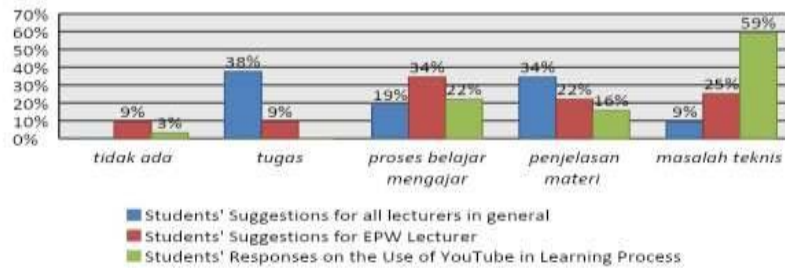


Figure 5. Students' Suggestions and Responses

Notes on Figure 5:

- *tidak ada* means no respond
- *tugas* (assignment)
- *proses belajar mengajar* (teaching and learning process)
- *penjelasan materi* (material explanation)
- *masalah teknis* (technical problems)

Research pointed out that it is considerable for EFL students to recognize World Englishes when they learn English (Sadeghpour & Sharifian, 2019). This notion is closely related to the idea of learning English in the context of higher education, especially the one that exists in Indonesian EFL

educational institutions. Numerical data in Figure 5 shows that respondents gave their responses mostly about 'assignment' followed by 'learning material explanation' for all lecturers in general, or at the English department with whom the students learned during the semester. For the EPW lecturer, the

respondents paid attention to the issue of 'teaching and learning process', 'technical problems', followed by 'material explanation'. Meanwhile, the respondents judged that the use of YouTube may link to the issue of 'technical problems', more than the other items as shown in Figure 5.

Table 1. One example of verbal statements on students' suggestions for all lecturers in general

No	Code	Verbal Statement
1	(<i>tugas</i>) assignment	<i>-kalau seandainya tugas yang diberikan harus tepat waktu, jangan memberikan pada saat minggu tenang dikasihtugas lebih dari 2 dalam waktu yang singkat</i> (trans: if only the assignment should be submitted on-time, please do not instruct it in the silent week with two assignments at the same time)
2	(<i>proses belajar mengajar</i>) teaching learning process	<i>-lebih sering berkomunikasi terkait pembelajaran dan mereview bersama silu jian atau membah soal yang sudah diujikan</i> (trans: please communicate more often about the learning process and review together the test results or discuss the already tested questions)
3	(<i>penjelasan materi</i>) material explanation	<i>-saya berharap dosen lebih bisa menjelaskan materi lebih baik lagi, sejauh ini sudah cukup baik, tetapi di antara kami masih banyak yang bingung, oleh karena itu, saya berharap bisa lebih lagi dalam penjelasan</i> (trans: I wish that the lecturer could explain the learning material more, but there are some of us who are still confused, therefore, the lecturer could give more explanation)
4	(<i>masalah teknis</i>) technical issues	<i>-mohon untuk tolerir mahasiswa yang sulit dengan keadaan sinyal, mungkin usajabapak/ibu</i> (trans: please tolerate students who face difficulty on internet signal, that's all, Sir/Ma'am)

Up to today in the 2021/2022 academic year, research pointed out that some pedagogical, technical, and personnel handicaps were faced by students when they attended virtual classes (Ali Ta'amneh, 2021). As can be seen in Table 1, pointed out the issues concerning students in the process of teaching and learning online. The verbal statements were genuinely written by the students; thus, the statements can be used to reflect

pedagogical implications to make the students' learning process even better in the future. Sufficient technical support needs to be provided for students to reach an optimum impact on learning achievement (Yan et al., 2021). Without knowing and understanding what the students used in learning, it is to be felt that the intended learning achievement would unlikely be successfully reached.

Table 2. One example of verbal statements on students' suggestions for EPW lecturer

No	Code	Verbal Statement
1	(<i>tugas</i>) assignment	<i>-adapun saran sayaitu semogamataperkuliah epw lebih mudah lagi dalam penugasan nya</i> (trans: my suggestion is that the EPW course can be a lot more easier on the assignment)
2	(<i>proses belajar mengajar</i>) teaching	<i>-saran saya husus dosen matakuliah EPW yaitu saya sangat suka dengan metode pembelajaran yang</i>

	learning process	<i>diberikandosen dengan menyediakan penjelasan bentuk dalam bentuk video sehingga mudah dipahami, dan saran saya semoga kedepannya dosen EPW bisa seperti ini terus</i> (trans: my suggestion is given specifically to EPW course, that I like the way how the lecturer applied the learning method by providing explanation in the form of video so it could be understandable, and my suggestion is that I hope the EPW lecturer can be like this continuously)
3	(<i>penjelasan materi</i>) material explanation	<i>-sejauh ini sudah cukup bagus, tapi saya harap Mr memberikan penjelasan yang lebih terhadap kami, supaya kami lebih mudah memahami materi</i> (trans: it is already good so far, but I hope that Mr could give more explanation to us, so that we could understand the learning material even more)
4	(<i>masalah teknis</i>) technical issues	<i>-agar selalu memperhatikan mahasiswa yang terkendala masalah kuota untuk perkuliahan daring dan masalah jaringan yang mungkin agak susah</i> (trans: to always pay attention to students who face internet quota problem for online learning, and the problem of internet network that might be difficult to handle)

In comparison to Table 1, verbal statements in Table 2 show that there is a certain expectation from the students to make the assignment in EPW easier. However, the teaching and learning process that took place in the EPW course was regarded as good and desirable by most students. Another expectation that the students have was related to the description of learning material that needs to be made simpler for them. Technical issues, such as the internet package quota have become one of the essential external issues that need to be solved. Since the EPW course deals with teaching paragraph writing to EFL students; therefore, the main purpose of the course is to help students be able to compose a paragraph in English academically. Scholars in the area of composition

studies argued that -composing means putting words together (Heilker, 1996, p. 40). Even though this definition may sound simple, in reality, writing is indeed a demanding task and requires a lot of practice and revisions, especially for EFL students. Language learning motivation is important to be considered by English teachers and lecturers during the Covid-19 pandemic situation (Teng et al., 2021).

One way to know such motivation is by assessing the students' expectations and evaluating what they have learned and how they learned in the semester. The following Table, or Table 3, shows one of the verbal statements for the respondents that have a close connection to each code made available in the data analysis stage.

Table 3. One example of verbal statements from students' responses on the use of YouTube

No	Code	Verbal Statement
1	(<i>tugas</i>) assignment	No comment
2	(<i>proses belajar mengajar</i>) teaching learning process	<i>-Baik, Sebaiknya dipertahankan sistem perkuliahan seperti ini, karena sangat membant mahasiswa dalam PBM berlangsung. Apalagikload mahasiswa yang ketinggalan materi jadi bisa mengaksesnya ke YouTube</i> (trans: alright, please keep the learning system this way, because it is very helpful for students during the teaching and learning took

		place, especially when a student misses a learning material, they can access it in YouTube)
3	(<i>penjelasan materi</i>) material explanation	sayangatsukajikamateri EPW inibisa di-upload melalui media YouTube. Tetapibahasanyajikabisadicampurkandengan Bahasa Indonesia agar kami lebihmemahamalagi” (trans: I really like it when the EPW learning material can be uploaded to YouTube, but the language should be combined with Indonesian language so we can understand it more)
4	(<i>masalah teknis</i>) technical issues	-sayamenyarankanuntukdurasi video nyalebihdisingkatlagi, karenamengingatpenggunaankuota juga, penjelasan yang terlalupanjang juga susah di pahami, sayaingindurasi video yang tidakterlalupanjangdanmudah di pahami, terimakasih (trans: I suggested that the duration for the video length should be shorter, considering the use of internet quota, a very long explanation is also difficult to understand, I want a shorter video length, and understandable. Thank you.

Table 3 briefly pointed out that the use of YouTube has been associated with aiding the teaching-learning process taking place online. The students' largely requested to have a shorter video for their learning materials. It is worthy of consideration for upcoming classes to have a more flexible way of representing the learning material. In the end, it is, of course, hoped for the students to be able to do self-reflection about their learning. A way that teachers can implement in the process of assessing student learning is to -[facilitate] the

development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning|| (L. Norton, 2003, p. 137). This consideration is important because research highlighted that during the Covid-19 situation, the changing pattern of teaching offline to online happened so quickly without preparation at several aspects pedagogically (Hofer et al., 2021). As a result, the classroom process taking place in schools, colleges, institutions, and universities face gradual changes and development, but to put it worldwide, it is not equal yet.

CONCLUSIONS

This article concludes that EFL students in Indonesia need a certain condition of preparedness before online teaching and learning take place. The quick changes without justifiable educational protocols have influenced the education process a great deal. The objectives of this research, therefore, have been fulfilled. The students responded in various ways about all lecturers and overall courses during the Covid-19 teaching and learning process. What we can reflect is that the

level of preparedness between the students is as crucial as preparedness between the teachers or lecturers. The rapid changes to the digital forms in the process of teaching and learning from offline to online left us with one big question:

-Until when we have to make a distance with our students emotionally, pedagogically, and socially while we wish from them is to grow intuitively, through meaningful interaction with us?||

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