



Teaching Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers through Video Conferencing during Pandemic: A Case Study

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Abstract— *The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted all face-to-face learning in Indonesia to online learning. The shift has also happened in learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). Online learning of BIPA, as a second language, made many teachers choose to use video conferencing. This study aimed to describe and explain the use of video conferencing, as well as the obstacles and solutions to BIPA learning at the Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study was qualitative research that employed a case study method at the Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta. The research data were collected using documentation, interview, and observation. The data were validated using the method and source triangulation. The data were then presented using an interactive method. The results of this study revealed that students and teachers at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta used video conferencing software in conducting BIPA learning, there was an increased number of students using video conferencing, there was an expansion of the video conferencing software being used, and there were particular features of video conferencing software needed in the online learning of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). Meanwhile, the obstacles experienced by the students and teachers at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta were poor internet connection, power outages, and boredom. The offered solutions were to ensure the stability of the internet connection, reschedule classes affected by power outages, and provide rest time amid learning hours.*

Keywords— *Indonesian language learning for foreign speakers, online learning, video conferencing.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has been involved in a new era of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning in Indonesia, which is usually carried out face-to-face, is forced to shift into online learning. Since the Covid-19 pandemic first broke out in Indonesia in March 2020, the online learning policy was announced. The Learning-from-Home policy subsequently instructs students and teachers to use the

available technology to carry out online or remote learning.

The policy also affects the learning of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (*BIPA*). Learning Indonesian as a second language for foreign speakers must implement online learning systems using the existing technology.

Students and teachers who are familiar with the use of digital technology can adapt to the new policy. However, the adaptation of online learning becomes quite

challenging for the students and teachers who are still lacking in terms of devices or technology needed.

Boettcher and Conrad (2016:11) define online learning as learning in which most materials are delivered online. Such learning or course is divided on a regular basis, including online meetings at the same time. Online learning has many advantages over face-to-face learning for schools or institutions with a supportive digital environment. These advantages include being more flexible and adaptive; supporting the improvements, individuals, and authenticity; excelling at the communicative tasks of the multilingual community; and taking advantage of autonomous learning (Gacs et al., 2020:381).

Nevertheless, online learning inevitably encounters many obstacles and challenges, especially for teachers and students with unqualified technology. Atmojo and Nugroho (2020:62-71) revealed several challenges experienced by teachers in conducting online learning. The challenges experienced by students included 1) Students do not have a mobile phone, 2) unstable internet connection, 3) the availability of internet quota, 4) low digital literacy, 5) students do not join the learning activities on time, 6) students submit the assignments exceeding the deadline, 7) differences in the level of ability, and 8) students complain about the number of homework given by teachers.

Meanwhile, the challenge experienced by teachers is the difficulty in building an emotional connection or engagement with the students. Egbert (2020:318) also explains that distance learning makes it difficult for teachers to take measurements of student involvement in completing the tasks.

Some teachers chose to use video conferencing software to overcome these obstacles in conducting online learning. Bates (2005:178) states that video conferencing or web conferencing is a conference variation using a bandwidth that allows users to communicate through their computers in real-time. By video conferencing, individuals can talk to each other and collaborate on text-based projects using document sharing, whiteboarding, and chat field features.

Video conferencing is also considered suitable for *BIPA* learning. As a second language learning, *BIPA* must present a live learning atmosphere in the online platform to make the language learning atmosphere more real for learners.

Several educators decided to use video conferencing to present the language learning interaction in language teaching and learning. Many studies investigated online learning through video conferencing, such as the study conducted by Rio-Chillcce et al. (2021:101). They utilized

a video conferencing platform on language learning at a university in Lima, Peru, during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rio-Chillcce et al., 2021:101)

Guillén et al. (2020:321) also stated that since the Covid-19 pandemic first broke out, many parties suggested using *Zoom* as a video conferencing software in learning. They claimed that *Zoom* could work effectively in online learning. However, *Zoom* still has several shortcomings, so it must be supported by using other software to facilitate the learning activities.

Meanwhile, Dhawan (2020:7) classifies video conferencing as a synchronous learning environment. A synchronous learning environment is intended as structured learning to measure student attendance in lectures, a timely interaction between students and teacher, and a possibility for rapid or instant feedback.

Synchronous learning is also regarded as one of the reasons for choosing online learning. Basilaia et al. (2020:101) said that one of the considerations in choosing an online learning platform is the ability to connect a teacher and at least 50 students at the same time. To that end, video conferencing can be the primary option.

The study conducted by Altner (2015:632) found that the students taught English lessons at Usak University and Dicle University in Turkey experienced the benefits of video conferencing in online learning. Most respondents agreed that video conferencing was reasonably practical and eased them in reviewing course materials, as it has a recording feature. The students also claimed to be more relaxed when using classroom-based video conferencing.

Online learning has also been implemented in Indonesia. One research discussing online learning was conducted by Febrianto et al. (2020:234). They stated that online learning had been carried out in Madura, Indonesia. However, the implementation still encountered several obstacles.

BIPA is not only linguistic aspects, but teachers must also equip *BIPA* learners with cultural aspects. According to Haryati et al. (2019:1984) one of the reasons international students learn the Indonesian language is because of the cultural diversity in Indonesia. Andayani and Gilang (2020:4119) also found that *BIPA* learners needed to make cultural adaptations since the cultures in Indonesia and their countries were different.

To this day, research on video conferencing mostly focuses on general lessons. Additionally, video conferencing in online language learning still tends to focus on learning English as a second language. Meanwhile, there has been no research on video conferencing in *BIPA* learning.

For this reason, the researchers were interested in conducting research on video conferencing in *BIPA* learning at the Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta. This institution was chosen because they had been teaching *BIPA* since 1995 and had started online learning even before the pandemic.

This research aimed to describe and explain the use of video conferencing at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta. In addition, this study sought to describe and explain the obstacles and solutions to video conferencing in *BIPA* learning at the Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study was qualitative research employing the case study method. Yin (2011:2) describes qualitative research as an in-depth study of a topic under certain conditions or everyday life. Meanwhile, Creswell (2009:13) views a case study as a researcher's effort to deeply explore an event, program, activity, or a more individualized matter.

The research was conducted at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta from May to October 2021. The Alam Bahasa Institute was chosen because it was still active in teaching Indonesian to foreign speakers during the pandemic. In addition, this institution was established in 1995, so it can be accounted for in teaching Indonesian for foreign speakers. Based on the observations carried out in April 2021, there were 168 active classes, with 84 teaching intermediate-level students. The researchers conducted the study on two intermediate-level classes with different students and teachers.

The present research data were in the form of field notes obtained through observation in *BIPA* learning, the necessary information regarding the *BIPA* online learning obtained from an interview with learners and teachers, and the documents as supporting components of *BIPA* online learning obtained using document analysis. To sum up, the research data were collected using documentation, observation, and interview techniques. The data were then validated using the source and method triangulation. Afterward, the researchers presented the data using the interactive method based on three components: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014:8).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researchers conducted the study at the Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta from May to October 2021. The study focused on two intermediate-level classes of Indonesian

for foreign speakers (*BIPA*), and both were private classes containing only one student and one teacher. As a result, the researchers obtained several findings as follows.

3.1 The Use of Video Conferencing in Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers in Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Alam Bahasa Institute in Yogyakarta is one of the oldest Indonesian language course institutions since it was established in 1995. As of 2020, there were 8,538 learners from 83 countries studied at this institution. Alam Bahasa Institute had its own curriculums. There were six curriculum choices, namely communicative beginner, fluent communicator, advanced communicator, natural communicator, communicative media, and working Indonesian. Meanwhile, the skill levels adopted by this institution were beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta was still holding Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (*BIPA*) teaching and learning activities. However, there was a change. Face-to-face learning had to be shifted to online learning.

In implementing online learning, Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta decided to apply synchronous learning using a video conferencing platform. It reasonably resulted in the increased use of video conferencing software. (Chan, 2021) stated that video conferencing apps began to be widely downloaded in March 2020. The use of video conferencing apps like *Microsoft Teams*, *Google Meet*, and *Zoom* grew by 150% in the first half of 2021. It indicated during the pandemic, the use of video conferencing was increased.

Dhawan (2020a:7) argued that online learning is the only option in a pandemic. Several countries had imposed health quarantines due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In such a state of crisis, online learning is the only option remaining. One of these online learning activities can be carried out utilizing video conferencing.

Mobo and Rahmat (2021:15) claimed that the need for video conferencing platforms like *Zoom* and *Google Meet* was increasing because it was relevant to the challenges that emerged in the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, the use of video conferencing did not interfere with health protocols and ensured the safety of teachers and students.

Pratama et al. (2020:58)(2020:58) also revealed that online meeting software was beneficial in learning and teaching. This kind of software was recognized as very supportive in carrying out the learning process. The increasing trend of online meeting platforms could also be beneficial to solve future problems.

Nonthamand (2020:144) discovered that the functions of video conferencing in learning included (1) a two-way communication tool, (2) a supporting learning tool, (3) a tool to compose learning activities, and (4) a tool for collaborative learning. His study also revealed that using video conferencing in the classroom to exchange ideas allowed students to work together and build relationships. Video conferencing could also be used for group activities so that teachers could divide students into several learning groups.

Hacker et al. (2020:563) stated that web-based video conferencing might provide certain facilities that no one else could replace during pandemic. In addition, the use of video conferencing also triggered a unique mixture of various aspects of human life.

Furthermore, there was an expansion of the video conferencing platform at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, this institution had provided online classes for students living abroad or far from Yogyakarta City. At that time, online learning employed video conferencing using *Skype* software.

However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, many video conferencing apps emerged. Respondent L.1 said that the choice of video conferencing platforms was increasingly diverse during the pandemic, such as *Zoom*, *Google Meet*, and *WebEx*. *Zoom* instantly had 10 million daily meeting participants in December 2019. Similarly, *Google Meet* and *Microsoft Teams* were also experiencing a significantly high increase (Peters, 2020; Thorp-Lancaster, 2020). Nevertheless, the increased use of video conferencing could not be separated from various challenges ((Karl et al., 2021:2).

The selection of video conferencing platform by students and teachers in Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta was based on feature availability. Based on the research results, the selection of platforms to support *BIPA* learning in the Alam Bahasa Institute was influenced by the time limits. Some video conferencing software has its own rules regarding time limits. *Zoom* applies a 40-minute time limit for unsubscribed users. Meanwhile, *Google Meet* does not set any time limit for its users even if they are not subscribed. It certainly affected the teachers' decisions considering that they were not facilitated by the subscription cost of video conferencing software, so they preferred to use the platforms without any time limits.

Another feature that teachers and students needed was screen sharing accessibility. This feature was essential to share the learning and presentation media used in delivering lesson materials. Respondent L.1 revealed that the screen sharing feature was needed because it could make teachers able to see the students' faces while

teaching and learning activities take place so that teachers could find out whether students were listening to the presentation or not.

In addition, respondent L.2 said that they also needed the chat and whiteboarding features. These two features are used to write new or difficult words to improve students' vocabulary. Chat column and whiteboarding features were also expected to work even if the teacher or student used the screen sharing feature.

Firmansyah (2020:16) (2020:16) found that one of the most widely used video conferencing platforms was *Zoom*. *Zoom* proved to be very useful on online learning conducted at STAI Al-Amin Dompus. Some of its features that supported the learning process were 1) Without a subscription, *Zoom* can accommodate 100 participants, 2) *Zoom* can schedule learning with the Schedule feature, 3) *Zoom* allows users to record and save videos during learning, (4) *Zoom* can be accessed on *Android*, *Windows*, and *Mac*, and (5) *Zoom* allows users to change their virtual background.

3.2 Problems and Solutions in Using Video Conferencing in Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers in Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The first obstacle experienced by teachers and students in the use of video conferencing was a poor internet connection. Respondent L.1 said that not all regions in Yogyakarta City had a good internet connection. Consequently, Respondent L.1 should go to a region or place with a good internet connection when teaching online. However, the video was delayed several times in learning due to a poor internet connection.

The same problem was found in several previous studies. Atmojo and Nugroho (2020:62-71) (2020:62-71) revealed that an unstable internet connection posed a severe challenge for teachers. Additionally, Schnurr and Smith (1995:8) also discovered that video conferencing could raise several constraints regarding the internet bandwidth, some of which were the delay and poor image projection due to unstable internet connection.

Other studies that also discussed the barrier in the form of unstable internet connection in online learning were conducted by Adedoyin, O.A., & Soykan (2020:4); Barrot, J.S., Llenares, I.I., & Rosario (2021:7331); Asmuni (2020:281); and Basar (2021:208).

The teachers addressed the issue of poor internet connection by finding a place to teach with a stable internet connection, installing the Wi-Fi, and making sure that their internet quota was enough, so their internet connection could work as expected.

In addition to the poor internet connection, online learning was also disrupted by electricity stability. Respondent S.1 said that their online learning had been disrupted by the power outages in the teacher's area, so the online learning could not be carried out as usual. The solution to overcome such a problem was to reschedule learning when the electricity was stable.

Dhawan (2020a:16) agreed that online learning using video conferencing did require a lot to prepare. Teachers and students must both have devices to support online learning. However, those devices, in turn, could also be a potential technical issue.

The last frequent obstacle was boredom in conducting video conferences. This boredom was often called *Zoom Fatigue*, named after one of the popular video conferencing apps. Respondents S.1 and S.2 admitted that they often experienced boredom in online learning carried out for several hours.

The solution to boredom was a short break in the middle of the learning process. Respondents L.1 and L.2 confirmed this solution, saying that the break time was adjusted to the number of sessions taken by students; the teacher gave a five-minute break in one hour of learning. The break time length was adjusted to the hours of lessons undertaken by students.

Bennett et al. (2021:12) found boredom at the use of video conferencing at 279 video conference meetings. It was indicated by participants turning off their microphone and camera. One of the recommendations given by researchers was to give a short break to reduce the boredom of meeting participants.

Karl et al. (2021:4) also identified the respondents' boredom in video conferencing. 35% of the study respondents said video conferencing increased their mental fatigue. It was due to too many meetings via video conference held in a day, which seemed intrusive. The study also demonstrated that boredom could occur when a video conference lasted more than 1.5 hours. Some respondents might also experience boredom when they have more than four video conferences in a day. Therefore, researchers recommended that organizations or institutions ascertain whether the video conferencing had been overused or not.

Hacker et al. (2020:571) also investigated the boredom in the use of video conferencing. The boredom occurred due to the demand for an increased but non-essential video conferencing time as one of the surveillance instruments. To address this issue, they suggested that organizations or companies provide a concept and feature ensuring the time and place of video conferencing could provide new experiences without physical and mental fatigue.

IV. CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 outbreak has made change in learning process. Face-to-face learning turn into online learning. Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta was one of the non-formal educational institutions that implemented the *BIPA* online learning. In conducting online learning, this institution decided to use video conferencing.

Before the pandemic, Alam Bahasa Institute already had online learning as a facility for its students. However, the number of students choosing to use online learning increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Beside of that, video conferencing platforms used were also increasingly varied. Before the pandemic, online learning in Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta was conducted using *Skype*. And then, during the pandemic, it was implemented using *Zoom*, *Google Meet*, *Skype*, and *WebEx*. The need for specific features became an indicator in selecting a video conferencing software. The features needed were unlimited access time, screen sharing, chat field, and whiteboarding or virtual whiteboard.

Several obstacles were encountered in the use of video conferencing in *BIPA* learning. Some of which were the internet connection instability, power outage, and students' boredom. The issue of internet connection instability was addressed by finding a place with a good internet connection before starting the lesson. The power outage was overcome by rescheduling learning when the electricity was normal. Meanwhile, the boredom caused by video conferencing was overcome by providing a 5-minute break for every 1 hour of learning.

This study implied that 1) the government or institutions must ensure the condition of their territory in terms of equal distribution of internet connections before deciding to implement online learning, especially using video conferencing; 2) the electrical stability needs to be a concern, so it will not disrupt the online learning process; 3) video conferencing platforms must update their features following the needs in learning; and 4) there needs to be an agreement between teachers and students regarding the use of video conferencing, so it will not lead to the mental and physical fatigue.

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