Lecturers' Challenges In Implementing Teaching And Learning (PdP) Online During The Covid-19 Pandemic

Rafidah Abdullah[1]*, Mohammad Hilmy Baihaqy Yussof[2], Radziah Abdullah[3]

Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Brunei*[1, 2, 3]

*[1]email: rafidah.abdullah@unissa.edu.bn
[2]email: baihaqy.yussof@unissa.edu.bn
[3]email: radziah.abdullah@unissa.edu.bn

Abstract

Brunei imposed strict curbs to halt the spread of Covid-19, leading the government to close many public sectors including the education sector. Thus online teaching and learning (PdP) has become an alternative to physical learning and teaching or lectures as it can help to reduce physical interactions. Among the applications used for online lectures are such as zoom application, google meet, miscrosoft team and others. In this study, the researchers will analyze the challenges faced by two lecturers of the Faculty of Arabic Language who teach Arabic Language Courses (for English language medium programme) at the Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University (UNISSA) in implementing PdP online. This is because it was found that there are some difficulties faced, such as the relatively large number of students who do not allow them to interact and deliver lectures effectively, students' difficulties in accessing the internet, difficulties in giving exercises and so on. This study is a descriptive qualitative study that uses a questionnaire through Google Form as a research instrument. The lecturers involved will also be interviewed to obtain information on the topic. This study only focused on two lecturers who conducted an Arabic course, which is a University Required Course (URC). The results of the study can help lecturers identify these challenges and think of ways to address them.

Keywords: Challenges, Teaching and Learning, Online, Arabic Language Course, Covid-19.

Abstrak

Semasa wabak Covid-19 melanda di seluruh negara, banyak sektor-sektor awam terjejas termasuk sektor pendidikan. Di antara

cara terbaik bagi membendung penularan wabak ini ialah dengan mengurangkan interaksi secara fizikal. Justeru pengajaran dan pembelajaran (PdP) secara dalam talian telah menjadi satu alternatif kepada pembelajaran dan pengajaran atau kuliah secara fizikal. Di antara aplikasi yang digunakan bagi kuliah secara dalam talian adalah seperti aplikasi *zoom*, *google meet*, *miscrosoft team* dan lain-lain. Pengkaji akan menganalisa cabaran yang dihadapi oleh dua orang pensyarah Fakulti Bahasa Arab yang mengajar Kursus Bahasa Arab (bagi program aliran bahasa Inggeris) di Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) dalam melaksanakan PdP secara dalam talian. Ini kerana didapati terdapat beberapa kesukaran yang dihadapi, misalnya jumlah pelajar yang agak ramai yang tidak memungkinkan mereka untuk berinteraksi dan menyampaiakan kuliah secara efektif, kesukaran pelajar dalam mengakses internet, kesukaran dalam memberikan latihan dan sebagainya. Kajian ini adalah kajian kualitatif berbentuk deskriptif yang menggunakan soal selidik melalui *Google Form* sebagai instrumen kajian. Pensyarah terlibat juga akan ditemubual bagi mendapatkan maklumat mengenai dengan topik kajian. Kajian ini hanya memfokuskan kepada dua orang pensyarah yang mengendalikan kursus Bahasa Arab, yang merupakan Kursus Wajib Universiti (*University Required Course* (URC)). Hasil dapatan kajian dapat membantu pensyarah mengenal pasti cabaran tersebut dan memikirkan cara menanganinya.

Kata Kunci: Cabaran, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran, Dalam Talian, Kursus Bahasa Arab, Covid-19.

A. Introduction

Since the Covid-19 pandemic has increased, many sectors have been affected, including the education sector. In Brunei Darussalam, the first case of Covid-19 was confirmed on 9 March 2020. Until the beginning of May 2020, the cases of infection in Brunei Darussalam were mostly local cases of infection. After that, only import cases were detected involving citizens entering Brunei Darussalam. Brunei Darussalam is also a country that has successfully controlled the infection of Covid-19 because zero local cases were recorded in more than 400 days after the last case of the first wave was recorded (Mohamed, 2021) (Yen Nee, 2020). However, on 7 August 2021, after 457 days of zero local cases, Brunei Darussalam experienced a second wave of the Covid-19 epidemic (Ministry of

Health Brunei Darussalam, 2021) (Nurzannah & Setiawan, 2020). For the education sector, among the earliest steps taken by the authorities is the closure of all schools including higher education institutions in Brunei Darussalam. This is because the best way to stop the spread of this epidemic is to reduce physical interaction. Therefore, online teaching and learning (PdP) becomes an alternative to physical learning and teaching (Baihaqy, 2021).

Among the educational applications that are often used for online lectures are zoom applications, google meet, microsoft teams and others. In this study, the researcher will analyze the challenges faced by two lecturers of the Arabic Language Faculty, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) who conduct Arabic language courses (for non-Arabic programs) categorized under the University Compulsory Course "URC" (University Required Course).

This study will uncover the answers to some of the following questions: 1) What is the medium of teaching and learning (PdP) used for online lecture and tutorial sessions?; 2) What is the medium of teaching and learning (PdP) used to submit

assignments/ give tests; 3) State some of the challenges faced by lecturers during online teaching and learning (PdP)?; 4) How to deal with the challenges?

B. Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative method (Moleong, 2007). The researcher used an open interview method based on some questions prepared (Sugiyono, 2016). The prepared questions were initially sent to the respondents via google form to be checked (Assidiqi & Sumarni, 2020). After that, the researcher conducts an open interview according to the questions given through the google form to find out more about the lecturer's response. The interview session for both respondents was held on 06 December 2021, at the office of the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arabic, Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University.

This study only focuses on one University Compulsory Course (URC) which is the AA1204 Arabic 1 course. This course is offered by the Faculty of Arabic, Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University to 1st year students for English-taught programs. This course is offered to students at the Faculty of Islamic Development, the Tayyiban

Halal Research Center, the Faculty of Islamic Finance and the Faculty of Sharia and Law (for non-Arabic-taught programs). In total, the number of students is 242 people. They are divided into two groups, and are taught by two local lecturers who have at least eight to ten years of teaching experience.

C. Result and Discussion

5.1 Respondent's background

This study was conducted to find out the challenges faced by lecturers in conducting the AA1204 Arabic 1 course online. This course is offered to 1st year students, who take a non-Arabic language teaching program. The teaching staff for this course is two people; namely respondent A and respondent B. Respondent A has 8 years of experience in teaching and learning Arabic for non-Arabic speakers, while respondent B has 10 years of teaching experience in the field. The total number of students is 224 people, who are divided into 2 groups. Respondent A taught a total of 128 people, and respondent B taught a total of 114 people.

To answer about the teaching and learning medium (PdP) used for online lecture and tutorial sessions, respondent A stated that he is more comfortable using the "Microsoft Team" application. This is because in his view this application is more "user friendly" compared to other applications. He also stated that since the number of students for this course exceeded 100 people, he could not use other applications due to the limitation of the number of users to only 100 people - if using it for free-. In addition, in his opinion, the "Miscrosoft Team" application makes it easier for him to record student attendance, by simply pressing a certain "setting". He also informed about the use of "telegram" to help some students who could not attend college due to certain problems. Respondent A will record the online teaching and learning, and send it to the students on the "telegram" application for their reference. While for respondent B, he tends to use the applications "Microsoft Team", "Google Meet", and "Telegram", but overall he is more comfortable and feels it is easier to use "Google Meet". He explained that one of the main reasons for using "Miscrosoft Team" - like respondent A - is its capacity which allows the participation of more than 100 users.

Touching on the medium of teaching and learning (PdP) to send assignments / give tests, respondent A shared that he uses the applications "Testmoz" and "Telegram". He said that since this course emphasizes the four main skills of writing, reading, listening and speaking, then the medium used needs to be appropriate. For respondent B, he encouraged to use the "Google Classroom" application and via email. In his opinion, this application is not only easy to use, but it can also help him in monitoring the engagement and delivery of student assignments on time.

5.2 Challenges faced by lecturers when conducting teaching and learning (PdP) online

In order to find out about the respondents' perception of some of the challenges that the researcher thinks are faced by lecturers in dealing with teaching and learning (PdP) online, the researcher has listed the challenges to get a response from both respondents.

5.2.1 Students respond to the information provided by the lecturer during the lecture.

For this challenge, respondent A gave an agreeable answer, while respondent B gave an uncertain answer. Respondent A explained that most students are able to respond immediately when the discussion is done. This is different from respondent B, where he explains that he receives less immediate response from students.

5.2.2 Students are able to interact well with the lecturer throughout the lecture and the question and answer session can be handled well.

As for this challenge, respondent A answered uncertainly, while respondent B expressed his agreement about this challenge. Respondent A explained that given the relatively large number of students, it was difficult for him to interact with his students well and effectively. This statement is different from respondent B. He agrees that students are able to interact well with the lecturer throughout the lecture and that the question and answer session can be handled well. However, to achieve a very agreeable response to this challenge is very impossible, because of the limited opportunities to interact and with

the relatively large number of students, which does not allow the lecturer to interact with them individually.

5.2.3 Students can submit assignments at the designated time.

For this challenge, both respondents agreed to state that the students were able to submit the assignments given at the designated time. Both of them did not agree very much because there are still a small number of students who do not submit assignments at the set time due to several factors such as their busyness as "frontliners", the unsatisfactory "internet" network and so on.

5.2.4 Students have skills in using online learning mediums.

For this challenge, respondent A expressed his uncertain response, while respondent B expressed his agreement in this regard. Respondent A explained that the students still have difficulty using the "Miscrosoft Team" application, which causes them to be late to attend college. Respondent B, on the other hand, thinks that students have been exposed to the latest learning medium, which makes them more prepared to face it. In this regard, with online teaching and learning, it not only helps students to become IT literate, but it also helps lecturers a lot and forces them to learn about the latest teaching and learning methods, in accordance with current developments.

5.2.5 The scoring process can be carried out smoothly.

Regarding this challenge, respondent A expressed his agreement about the smoothness of the marking process even though he only studied and taught online. The same is also agreed by respondent B. This is because the medium for sending assignments is clear and easy to understand and access.

5.2.6 The results of online student assignments are good.

Respondent A in his statement said he agreed that the results of the online student assignments were good. Respondent B expressed his strong agreement on this matter. This proves that despite learning and teaching

online, the quality of learning and teaching is not affected badly, and learning and teaching can still be carried out well and effectively.

5.2.7 Students obtained good marks in the tests conducted.

Respondent A in his statement stated that he agreed that the students obtained good marks in the tests conducted. Respondent B expressed his strong agreement on this matter. Once again, this proves that the quality of online learning and teaching does not really affect the learning and teaching system, and it can still be carried out and achieve the desired results.

5.2.8 Lecturers are able to perform PdP online according to the time and schedule that has been set.

Respondent A in this regard explains that he agrees with the statement that lecturers are able to carry out PdP online according to the time and schedule that has been set. Respondent B expressed his strong agreement with this matter.

5.2.9 Students have sufficient internet access for the PdP process online.

As for this challenge, both respondents disagreed about it. After the research was conducted, there were several problems faced by students and lecturers, among them weak internet network, no internet access, living far away that does not make it possible to reach the internet network and so on.

5.2.10 The online PdP process is easier compared to face-to-face PdP.

For this challenge, both respondents have shown a less agreeable response. This means that both respondents prefer face-to-face teaching and learning, compared to online. Both respondents stated that although online PdP can be handled well, but in their view face-to-face PdP is more effective and helps students in the language learning process.

5.2.11 Online PdP provides flexible time for lecturers to complete learning modules.

Respondent A gave an uncertain response, while respondent B expressed a less agreeable response. This is because in the opinion of both respondents,

learning and teaching online actually adds to the task and workload. This is because there are some things that are usually done directly with the students, but due to online learning and teaching, the students have to send them, and the lecturers have to examine the matter outside of lecture hours.

5.2.12 Online PdP projects are only suitable to be handled individually.
Respondent A agreed that online PdP projects are only suitable to be handled individually, considering the limitations of socializing and meeting fellow students in congregations. However, respondent B stated that he was not sure about this matter. This is because in his opinion, if the students give a solid and accurate commitment, then the group project can still be done even if they don't meet together.

5.2.13 PdP online makes lecturers more creative in giving assignments.
This point was strongly agreed by both respondents. They are very confident that PdP online makes lecturers more creative in giving assignments. They are not only focused on textbooks, even the tasks given must be in various forms to add more fun to learning.

5.2.14 Student attendance can be recorded properly.
To this suggestion, both respondents responded uncertainly. Although they usually use the "Google Form" or "Google Sheet" application to take attendance, sometimes they also face unexpected problems.

In order to answer questions about the challenges faced by lecturers other than those mentioned above, both respondents have stated some of the following challenges:

First: As English stream students, most of them are not used to typing with an Arabic keyboard. Thus, this raised some complaints from the students because of their difficulty, and their inability to answer quickly in the allotted time. This matter is different when learning face-to-face, because students use handwriting & this is not foreign to them because almost all (or all) have studied at the religious school level.

Second: Among other challenges faced is that there are a few students who do not have an Arabic keyboard and this further delays the process of answering questions that have been set limits time.

Third: It was found that there are a number of students who use their mobile phones in their studies. Thus, complaints were heard where the slides shared by the lecturer were sometimes not clear, not in line with the lecturer's explanation during the lecture, and it was even sadder when the slides shared by the lecturer could not be seen by the students.

D. Conclusion

It cannot be denied that the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic has to some extent affected the PdP process between lecturers and students. However, with this online PdP, at least it is able to develop the skills of using the latest information technology among lecturers and also students. Among the unique challenges found in this study is the need for the course to be answered and written in Arabic through a computer. Therefore, using an Arabic keyboard via a computer takes a long time compared to physical

PdP. Among other challenges that are very significant is the response level of students who do not have an Arabic language background the level of response given by students who have an Arabic language background. Therefore, the lecturers have used various effective methods, including calling the student's name so that the student can respond well. In addition, the main challenge faced by the lecturers is the limited internet data experienced by the students so that not all students can follow the kuliyah well. Regarding the medium used, because the number of students is over 100 people, the lecturers are more comfortable to choose Google Meet and also Microsoft Teams compared to Zoom. This shows that all the mediums used have their own uniqueness in performing PdP tasks.

E. Bibliography

Assidiqi, M. H., & Sumarni, W. (2020). Pemanfaatan platform digital di masa pandemi covid-19. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana*, 298–303.

Baihaqy, M. H. (2021). The Impact of COVID-10 Towards Developent of Teaching and Learning in Brunei Darussalam with Specific Reference to Kolej Universiti

Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan (KUPU SB). AsTEN Journal of Teacher Education 2021. Special Issue No.1, 23-30.

Kementerian Kesihatan Negara Brunei Darussalam. (2021, November 10). Terkini COVID-19 Brunei Darussalam. Retrieved from Kementerian Kesihatan.

Lebar, O. (2015). Penyelidikan Kualitatif: Pengenalan Kepada Teori Dan Metode. Ipoh: Peneribit UPSI

Moleong. (2007). *Metodologi Penelitioan Kualitatif*. PT. Remaja Rosda Karya.

Mohamed, M. S. (2021, Jun 24). Utusan Malaysia. Retrieved from Sudah

413 Hari Brunei Catat Sifar Kes Jangkitan Covid-19.

Nurzannah, & Setiawan, H. R. (2020). Program Kemitraan Masyarakat Di Tengah Pandemi Covid-19 Bagi Guru SD (Pembuatan Media Evaluasi Pembelajaran Online). *JCES (Journal of Character Education Society)*, *3*(2), 308.

Sugiyono. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.

Yen Nee, L. (2020). *The pandemic's effect on education is not being discussed enough, says Indonesian minister*. CNBC.