TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES TOWARD GOOGLE CLASSROOM AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING ELT CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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Abstract
Google Classroom as a tool that connects teachers and students which encourage interaction with each other through a virtual online class that offers various features. This study was conducted to investigate the effects of using Google Classroom in the ELT class for improving classroom interaction through the teacher's perspectives. By using the phenomenological qualitative research with a sample of one private junior high school teacher in Yogyakarta, data collected were obtained using open-ended and semi-structured interviews. The analysis was done by reading each transcript, rereading, and looking for common words that fit the category. The result revealed that the use of Google Classroom in ELT class is beneficial in the learning process, it can increase students' attention. However, some students did not pay attention to the learning process, and the students used English to communicate if the teacher asked them in the learning process.

Keywords: Teacher's Perspectives, Google Classroom, Classroom Interaction

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the use of technology is needed because it would continue to develop in facilitating personal work as well as in facilitating the teaching and learning process. In line with this, technology is an essential issue in the 21st century, one of which is in the field of education (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). The utilization of technology in learning must be adapted to the needs of the environment where the learning process takes place. Likewise, Shah (2013) argued that the integration of education and technology makes the education process more innovative and enjoyable and also creates a new learning environment. The technology used in education aims to facilitate the learning process. Thus, the function of technology as a learning facility can achieve its goal of improving learning performance.

Säljö (2010) stated that the role of technology is not only a tool in helping the learning process but also changes how learning happens in the classroom. In this case, there will be different how learning happens with technology, and without technology

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used in the learning process. Because the technology used can change the style of learning that occurs depends on what type of technology. For example, when it is possible to carry out distance learning, it will use internet media to connect students and teachers. The teacher will be helped in explaining their material to students. Moreover, Kozma (2003) advocated that it is vital for teachers to learn in using the technology itself and apply it correctly to interact with students in the classroom for better teaching and learning.

According to Bahadur Rana (2017), if the teacher can use technology appropriately, it will be more useful for students in the learning process. Furthermore, technology in the hands of a great teacher can be beneficial, and that technology will not replace that teacher (Roy, 2019). Technology enhances learning is exceptionally useful when teachers can operate technology related to the material taught in class. There is a relationship between the technology used by the circumstances of students in receiving material so that the material delivered by the teacher to students through the technology used can be easily accepted.

The existence of technology will enhance student participation and learning outcomes. Hence, the traditional approach applied by the teachers in their classroom making students will be passive in the learning activity; if compared with the technology used in the classroom, students will become more active (Hicks et al., 2001). However, it has become a challenge for many countries to change traditional approaches to technology-enhanced ones (Kurt, 2014). The profound impacts on learning goals will occur in the application of technology implemented by teachers and students. Besides, Hwang et al. (2015) mentioned that many advantages in supporting students to achieve the desired learning goals if they combine innovative teaching strategies with the technology used in the classroom. Furthermore, technology facilitates the improvement of learning activities with the help of teachers with suitable learning strategies.

Recently, the use of technology as a teaching strategy for English Language Teaching (ELT) is becoming popular to improve comprehension skills in a course. Traore & Kyei-Blankson (2011) declared that in language classes, technological devices are used. With the various types of technological devices that students need to learn, they will be motivated, and a sense of freedom will emerge (Genc Ilter, 2009). Furthermore, technology plays an essential role in supporting and enhancing language. For instance, using the internet can create online communities to connect teachers and learners wherever they are. Wang (2004) stated that it helps in developing students' language skills in the ELT class and meeting their communication needs.

There are many types of technology that can be used in the ELT class for better learning and teaching. Many developers have developed technology to make it easier for teachers and students to learn. All those technology can be found in service providers that are already widely spread and easy to find. Also, many schools have implemented technology-based learning systems, and success helps in the learning process. Technologies that can be used in the ELT class are communicative tools such as e-mails, chat rooms, discussion boards, and internet conferences (Traore & Kyei-Blankson, 2011). Those helps teachers and students to interact with each other in distance learning.

Interaction between students and students or teachers and students in the ELT class is essential even though they are not facing to face. Because interaction is the foundation of second language learning, in which learners work both to develop their communicative skills and to create their identities socially in cooperation and negotiation (Brown, 2007). Therefore, this is very important in the process of the learning process in the ELT class to receive material from the teacher to students so that students can understand the material given. In a way, students are involved in the interaction. So, there will be a balance between teacher and students of the learning process in the ELT class. Therefore, not only will the teacher be active in the learning process, but also students will participate. Thus, classroom interaction is vital to reach learning goals (Taous, 2013).

Sukmawati & Nensia (2019) defined that the delivery of learning material will be carried through the telecommunications system when the teacher and students are in different places or distance learning. Many technology tools can be used to help ELT teachers and students connect wherever and whenever to transfer information. Forth, Martin & Parker (2014) claimed that many faculties offer online virtual classes that allow them to interact in real-time. One of the ways to convey that information in the ELT class is to use Google Classroom. According to Harjanto & Sumarni (2019), Google Classroom as a tool that connects teachers and students, which encourages interaction with each other through a virtual online class that offers various features. Thus, the presence of Google Classroom in the learning process of the ELT class will help distance learning to be more effective. The relationship between teacher and student will be maintained even though the distance separates them.

Google Classroom is a free platform provided and developed by Google as a media for teaching and learning activities. Teachers and students can visit https://classroom.google.com in their web browser to access Google Classroom, and they also can download it in their mobile phone via Play Store (Android) or App Store (IOS).

Shaharanee et al. (2016) asserted that Google Classroom facilitates teachers to be able to interact with their students easily and can organize and provide feedback on assignments given to students more efficiently. Therefore, Google Classroom can be an alternative media for ELT class, considering that it can connect teachers and students wherever and whenever to create an effective and efficient class.

Further, many researchers have conducted a study about the effect of Google Classroom in ELT class. Each study has a different purpose in providing opinions. One of which is (Mualim et al., 2019) that involved 135 students taking courses of critical reading and essay writing with the purposive sample of their study. They found that most of the students enjoyed using Google Classroom, but some students did not feel comfortable and confident. The study conducted by Iftakhar (2016) used the perception of teachers and students in using Google Classroom at Daffodil International University. The result was that Google Classroom could create functional interactions between teachers and students because of the learning material easily. Another study is conducted by Ratnaningsih (2019), analyzing five students of Musi Charitas Catholic University, Palembang. The finding was that Google Classroom enhances writing and speaking skills in the form of tasks, based on their life experiences. The teacher can give feedback on students' work. Using Google Classroom can improve the teaching and learning process (Harjanto & Sumarni, 2019; Mafa, 2018; Shaharanee et al., 2016; Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using Google Classroom in ELT class for improving classroom interaction for private junior high school students, Indonesia, through the teacher's perspectives. The phenomenological approach using open-ended and semi-structured interviews will be used in this study because it is suitable for exploring participant experiences according to the context in which it happened (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). To guide this study, there will be a research question, namely: What is the view of teacher about using Google Classroom in the ELT class to improve classroom interaction?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed with phenomenological qualitative research to explore the perspective of junior high school teacher in using Google Classroom in the ELT class to improve classroom interaction. This approach is for qualitative research that focuses on participants' life experiences according to the context (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). The

fundamental goal of the phenomenological approach is to describe the nature of certain phenomena (Cresswell, 2012). Von Bertanffy originally developed the phenomenological approach. He defined that in phenomena, there is a pattern that creates a system, and then the system provides greater insight into a phenomenon (Drack, 2009).

There was only 1 participant in this study, a teacher who taught English courses at one private junior high school in Yogyakarta. The research instruments used were open-ended interviews and semi-structured interviews. This interview focused on the research objectives. The participant was interviewed because of one semester of experience in using Google Classroom in the ELT class so that it would be more comfortable and more understanding in explaining the perceived experiences. The participant does not mind being interviewed and received no reward; this is pure as a volunteer. Interviews were conducted by telephone.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and during interviews, notes were taken to help the data analysis phase to look for categories throughout the interview. The analysis was done by reading each transcript, rereading, and looking for common words that fit the category. The next phase of analysis makes the first list of categories so that several categories emerge as a conceptual picture of the participant's experience.

The participant provided honest responses according to the questions asked. To validate the data, the threat of bias and conclusions is minimized. To verify the accuracy of participant responses, the participant was given the option to provide feedback in reviewing their transcript to check its accuracy, but the participant does not provide feedback.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings are the result of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, which is a life experience and certain phenomena of the answer given in open-ended and semi-structured interviews. The discussion is summarized in the three categories identified in the functionality, students' attention, and the use of English in communication.

Category 1: The Functionality of Google Classroom

When participants are asked about the function of Google Classroom, participants explained that Google Classroom is very useful for distance learning. Google Classroom can also be accessed easily.

"Google Classroom helps me as a teacher to easily provide subject matter to students. It becomes more effective and efficient in time. So students can be more disciplined in collecting assignments because there are due dates for assignment collection" (YP)

It indicates that the use of Google Classroom as a medium in conveying learning material is comfortable. Before the teacher gives an assignment, the teacher can distribute the material as reading material for students in an increasing understanding of the topic of the assignment to be given. Therefore, this can be a discussion in the ELT class which is useful to deepen their knowledge of the topic. The teacher can also provide feedback after the class session ends which can be accessed by students anytime and anywhere. Students can also see the material given when they forget. Moreover, this can save their time (Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019). With one click, all material can be accessed by all students at the same time.

Category 2: Students' Attention in Google Classroom

The participant felt that Google Classroom had a positive impact on students' attention in the ELT class. Nevertheless, the participants also assumed that some students lacked attention in Google Classroom because the students did not answer the questions given by the teacher.

"ELT class conditions in Google Classroom are quite good. Some students pay attention to the teacher when explaining the material. However, some students ignore the lesson. But they work the assignments that given by the teacher" (YP)

The statement from the participant above implies that there are positive and negative effects on the use of Google Classroom in the ELT class on students' attention. Most of them pay attention or answer every question asked by the teacher in Google Classroom. However, some students do not pay attention or answer the questions given. Moreover, the students who did not pay attention still keep working on and collecting the assignments into Google Classroom. Thus, the implementation of the use of Google Classroom in the ELT class is felt to be somewhat effective in catching the attention of students in giving lessons (Harjanto & Sumarni, 2019).

Category 3: The Use of English For Communication in Google Classroom

The participant stated that by using Google Classroom in ELT class, most students use English to communicate with teachers and friends. However, some students still use Indonesian when communicating or asking questions and answers because they are not required to use English in the classroom.

"Some students use English in an inactive class in Google Classroom, unlike when they are face to face. Some other students still use Indonesian in the discussion when the learning process" (YP)

It can be found that some students in using Google Classroom do not use English actively to communicate, but they are more active in using English when face to face in active learning. Some of them communicate using English but do not pay attention to grammar. Participants noted that Google Classroom was less efficient in arousing students to communicate in English more actively.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of Google Classroom in ELT classes in improving classroom interaction in one private SMP, Yogyakarta. Based on the findings in this study, it can be concluded that the use of Google Classroom in ELT class is beneficial in the learning process, both in the discussion, giving and receiving material, as well as gathering assignments. Students only send assignments to the place provided without meeting directly with the teacher. Al-Maroof & Al-Emran (2018) stated that students could submit assignments given by the teacher in Google Classroom. Students will also get notifications if there are material, assignments, and due dates of the assignments, to the score feature in Google Classroom. Students can get and see their scores from assignments that have been done by them in Google Classroom (Iftakhar, 2016). In general, the teacher agreed that Google Classroom is easily accessible anywhere and anytime in providing material. So students can increase their knowledge because this application can be accessed via their laptop or smartphone with various types of operating systems that are running on their devices. According to Hausammann (2017), Google Classroom is compatible with Windows, Linux, Android, IOS, etc. Besides, teachers and students need not fear to lose their assignments or materials because they can be stored very well. It is better if they use printed paper which can sometimes be lost or damaged (Carley, 2015). the form of the material can be Word, PowerPoint, and Pdf. Students can also reopen the material if they forget. Therefore, Google Classroom is also very easy to use. The features in it are simple so that anyone will be easy to operate (Harjanto & Sumarni, 2019).

Classroom interaction requires communication between teacher and student. In helping to improve classroom interaction, the teacher uses Google Classroom as an application that helps in interaction in the ELT class. The findings above show that Google

Classroom can increase student attention in the learning process. As defined by Sukmawati & Nensia (2019) that teachers and students can interact with Google Classroom. In long distances, they can still communicate with each other. By conducting discussions or question and answer sessions in the room that is available, the teacher can get the attention of students with the answers from students when the teacher asks about a particular topic. Hence, students can do interactions related to the topic. There is also room for interaction between students and other students. If there are students who are shy to comment in the room that there are other students, they can comment in a private room provided by the teacher.

Moreover, some students do not pay attention to class because they do not reply or comment when there is a material delivered by the teacher. In the absence of online and offline features in Google Classroom, this makes it difficult for teachers to control their students when there is a discussion in class. So no class interaction runs like a face-to-face class. One of the factors causing students not to enter Google Classroom is that there is no internet connection problem (Mualim et al., 2019). This is in line with Nagele (2019) that Google Classroom provides several benefits, namely using paperless, and it can be accessed anytime and anywhere when a device used is connected to an internet connection.

The use of Google Classroom in ELT class has a role for students to communicate using English. Some students communicate using English when the teacher asks questions even though they do not pay attention to the grammar used. Some students also did not use English when there is a discussion or question and answer session. In the findings above, they will be active in using English in class face to face. It also depends on the teacher's instructions; if the teacher does not ask students to use English to communicate with other students or the teacher, then some of them still use Indonesian in the ELT class. Some of the students also had difficulties in understanding the material or questions given by the teacher. Therefore, the use of English to communicate has problems because there are no friends or teachers who are close to them to ask questions directly. Accordingly, Mualim et al. (2019) stated that the role of Google Classroom as an application in effective learning is challenging to achieve due to student constraints in conducting independent learning.

CONCLUSION

The findings and discussions of this phenomenological study provide an insight on the teacher's perspective toward the use of Google Classroom in ELT classes for improving classroom interaction. It can be seen that there are three categories discussed in this study, namely the functionality of google classroom, students' attention in google classroom, and the use of English for communication in google classroom. It can be concluded that in category 1, Google Classroom makes it easy for teachers to provide material or assignments to students. Students can see their grades in google classroom with feedback provided by the teacher. In category 2, mostly students pay attention and give respond when there is an ongoing discussion even though there are some students who do not answer questions from the teacher because they did not pay attention. In category 3, the students use English to communicate when there was the instruction from the teacher. Otherwise, they used Indonesian to communicate both in asking and answering. This research has a positive influence on teachers to use Google Classroom in their learning models. It's like the findings made by Almio Susetyo Harjanto and Sri Sumarni (2018) that teachers use it as a facilitation tool to manage student assignments, organize classes, and accommodate student interactions. Using Google Classroom is very helpful for hosting virtual classes. By maximizing the features in the google classroom, it has benefits for their professional development. For a teacher, these findings can contribute to the realm of English language teaching in offering some insights for designing learning activities through virtual classrooms and also providing a sound understanding of the use of technology to develop specific English learning.

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