



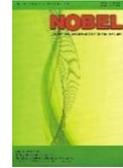
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## THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF ONLINE LEARNING IN THE REMOTE AREAS DURING THE NEW NORMAL PERIOD

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### Abstract

Online learning still occurs in many places during the New Normal, along with limited face-to-face learning. However, offline learning in several regions had to be withdrawn because of the new version of the coronavirus. One platform of online learning that is often used is Google Classroom. This study aims to determine the difficulty level of online learning with Google Classroom in STKIP Pamane Talino students in the new normal period. To reach the aim of the study, the researchers used a qualitative descriptive method. Fifty-nine students in the Extensive Reading class of second-semester students of the English Education Study Program, STKIP Pamane Talino, were selected to participate in this study. The data analysis technique used in this study was critical analysis. The data were collected through observation and interviews. The questionnaire results showed that 73% of the respondents agreed with the ease of using the Google Classroom application in online learning, which can be categorized as good. From the result above, it can be suggested that online learning using Google Classroom is one of the alternative ways to online learning in remote areas during the new normal period.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the efforts to improve learning quality is using a particular application. In the learning process in the new normal, blended learning is still used. Face-to-face learning in class will be carried out if the situation and conditions are safe, while online learning is carried out when conditions are less safe. At this time, the government has suggested conducting limited face-to-face learning. However, with the coronavirus emerging again, the government has decided to return to online learning to secure all students and educators.

Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is explained that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students can actively develop their potential and have a religious spirit, mastery, personality, wisdom, noble character, and skills needed by oneself, society, state, and country. To carry out the learning process in this new normal era, educators must be ready to do online and offline learning because situations and conditions can change at any time, and sometimes educators can hold limited face-to-face learning in class. However, if the situation does not allow offline learning, educators must be ready to hold online learning.

The limited face-to-face learning process has begun to be implemented at STKIP Pamane Talino since the end of the 2021-2022 academic year. However, given the increasing conditions in corona cases, face-to-face learning activities have shifted back to online learning. During online learning in the new normal period, English Education study program students use the Google Classroom application because this application is considered the easiest and most cost-effective compared to other applications. By utilizing this Google Classroom, lecturers and students will be connected digitally. Lecturers can deliver material without having to meet face-to-face with students. Google Classroom can also be accessed anytime and anywhere through mobile phones, PCs, and tablets based on Android and iOS. The open-source-based Google Classroom application is also free of charge (Hanifah & Putri, 2020). However, cases in remote areas of Indonesia are not the same as in urban areas. For remote areas, especially in Landak district, West Kalimantan, several villages still have difficulty getting a stable signal. Students are advised to be in urban areas with a fairly stable signal to overcome this difficulty.

Twenty-first-century learning (21CL) can be viewed as learning experiences that engage students in fostering sociocultural, cognitive, metacognitive, productive, and technological competencies to function in a 21st-century workplace (Drajati et al., 2021). Related to technological competencies, students are hoped to have the skills to use a variety of applications used in learning. The use of Google Classroom can be multiplatform, namely through computers and mobile phones. Teachers and students can visit the

<https://classroom.google.com> site or download the application via the play store on Android or the app store on iOS with the keyword google classroom. The use of the LMS is free of charge, so its utilization can be carried out as needed (Gladilina et al., 2020). Google Classroom can connect students and teachers inside and outside the school (Wicaksono & Rachmadyanti, 2017). Google Classroom can be accessed in 2 ways, namely through the website and application. The website can be accessed using any browser, such as Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, or Safari. The application can be downloaded for free through the Play Store for Android and the App Store for iOS.

During the online learning process, students of the English Education Study Program STKIP Pamane Talino experienced different difficulty levels. This is what attracted the authors to survey the level of difficulty experienced by these students. Online learning using Google Classroom makes students more able to think creatively and act actively during the learning process. Because in Google Classroom, all learning tools are available, from attendance, material provision, presentation facilities, etc. Lecturers and students use these devices according to their needs.

The study aims to determine the difficulty level of online learning using Google Classroom in STKIP Pamane Talino students in the new normal period. It is really to be done because understanding the difficulty of online learning using Google Classroom will help the institution recommend this application for online learning in the future.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The industrial era 4.0, the digital revolution and the technological disruption era have different characteristics from the previous era. This era affects people's health, economy, and education. The changing times touch on various aspects of life, from politics, security, health, and education (Ellitan, 2020). People who cannot keep up with developments in this industrial 4.0 era will be left behind in various areas of life. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting, and Google Meet applications were solutions for interactive multimedia in online learning (Mazda & Fikria, 2021).

The industrial revolution 4.0 and the Covid-19 pandemic remind us to clean up and develop sporadically. All challenges and their impacts should signal various groups to upgrade their abilities because they are an important part that must be done to remain competitive and survive (Syakur et al., 2020). This, of course, impacts the field of education, as educators should always keep abreast of the times. If, under normal conditions, the teaching and learning

process can be done face-to-face in the classroom, in times of emergency such as the pandemic or new normal, the learning system inevitably has to be done online or in distance learning. The presence of Google Classroom is considered a new option for developing knowledge properly. With the help of unlimited sources of information, Google Classroom users can still maximize internet devices and facilities to choose which sources to use (Hapsari & Pamungkas, 2019).

The millennial generation is born in the era of technology and information development which is experiencing rapid development. The millennial generation is also known as the booming internet generation. The use of technology by the millennial generation includes Google, YouTube, email, and other social media. In this millennial generation, the internet is part of the life of the younger generation, or digital natives (Nainggolan & Manalu, 2021). Previous research conducted by Wiguna (2022) surveyed the difficulty levels in online learning using Whatsapp during the Covid-19 period. The study showed 11.3% for the difficulty level in learning, so the results for ease were 88.7%. The data analysis shows a low difficulty in using the Whatsapp application for online learning. Other research conducted by Umairah and Zulfah (2020) showed that the average score of students' motivation in learning using Google Classroom is 87.83.

The advantages of using Google Classroom include increasing the teacher and student's mastery of IT. Teachers can use various media for learning in Google Classroom and other media linked to the classroom. While the drawbacks are network problems and quota limitations owned by students, which can be an obstacle in the learning process (Mahardini, 2020). By using Google Classroom, students' problem-solving abilities are better. Besides that, the effectiveness of using Google Classroom can be seen from the positive responses from students (Maharani & Kartini, 2019). This research also shows that the performance of Google Classroom supports learning in the Mathematics Learning Psychology course because, with Google Classroom, it is easy for students to store documents such as material or important assignments sent via Google Classroom (Utami, 2019).

The new thing that distinguishes this research is the media used and the research location. If previous research used the WhatsApp application, this research used the Google Classroom application. If the research that has been carried out is located in an urban area, the capital city of West Kalimantan province, this research was conducted in a location that is still part of the interior of the Landak district, which is part of West Kalimantan. In addition, the research that has been done tends to examine the benefits of Google Classroom in the online learning

process. The research conducted this time examines the level of difficulty of students in remote areas in using the GC application in the online learning process during the new normal period.

Online learning is generally understood as distance learning using information technology such as laptops and devices (mobile phones) between students and teachers and between students and lecturers so that teaching and learning activities can run properly (Sa'diyah et al., 2021). The problem that students often face is boredom with learning. Moreover, in online learning, many students sometimes feel bored with the material taught by the lecturer. The boredom is caused by the material being explained that is not clear or the method of delivering material that is centered on the lecturer (teacher's center), which is often boring because communication occurs only in one direction. However, people cannot be separated from learning. Learning is part of being human because it can last a lifetime. Humans can learn alone and with other people, the environment, and environmental conditions. If students feel bored, it can affect their learning outcomes (Wiguna, 2022). This is supported by principal symptoms that appear and indicate that students experience learning boredom, namely the many principal complaints raised either through private conversations or their principal social media posts. The pandemic principle requires students to stay at home, adding to students' lack of enthusiasm.

Online learning (on a network) is conducted through various applications supporting the learning process, starting from face-to-face applications such as Zoom, Google Meet and other online media platforms such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp group, etc. The google classroom application was chosen to help students and lecturers as teachers conduct lectures online. Google Classroom is an application in the form of a learning system management provided by Google and can be connected by email, making it easy to access. (Suhada et al., 2020). Implementation related to Google Classroom is considered to be able to develop independence and creative thinking. Other research proves that the application of Google Classroom has the potential to make the learning process more effective and efficient. Not only effective, but the use of Google Classroom also has the advantage of being free and easy to use by educators and students.

Online learning aims to provide quality learning services in a massive and open network (online) to reach more and wider audiences. The Working from Home (WFH) policy is contained in the Circular Letter of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN & RB) Number 50/2020 concerning the Second Amendment to the Circular Letter of the Minister of PAN & RB Number 19/2020 concerning Adjustment of the Work System of State Civil Apparatus in Efforts to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19 in

Government Agencies. As part of civil workers (*Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN*), teachers carry out the learning process that needs to be done online or in a network (online). However, implementing the online learning process has several obstacles (Umairah & Zulfah, 2020).

Various obstacles are encountered in using the Google Classroom application, especially for beginners. However, because this device is easy to learn, after using this application for one semester, students are usually familiar with this application. However, regarding the constraints of the unstable internet network, this often results in the use of Google Classroom being less than optimal, especially in 3T (stands for *terdepan, terluar, tertinggal* – the remote and underdeveloped areas in Indonesia's border), where the facilities and infrastructure are still very limited. In addition, the device used as a computer, laptop, or smartphone must meet the standards. If the device used by students is still below the standard, this will cause the smartphone's memory to fill up quickly, and the smartphone cannot function properly. This often happens to students who have substandard smartphones. Another difficulty is that the internet data plan students must provide to participate in this online learning must be adequate. With the very limited conditions of facilities and infrastructure, the use of the Google Classroom application is very appropriate for students in this rural area. Besides saving credit, Google Classroom also provides complete content for online learning. With limited facilities and infrastructure, the Google Classroom application is appropriate for rural students. Besides being cheap, Google Classroom also provides complete tools for online learning (Tuminah et al., 2021).

To reduce students' dependence on smartphones, blended learning can also be done in the New Normal period. Using blended learning is needed to reduce and prevent students from using computers and cell phones for negative things, such as excessively playing games, social media, and watching videos. This is a diversion of actions that can be taken. Blended learning, which has the characteristics of being supervised by teachers and people, is something to be achieved (Wicaksono & Rachmadyanti, 2017). This study aimed to determine the difficulty level of STKIP Pamane Talino students using the Google Classroom application in the new normal period.

## **METHOD**

Research is an activity that aims to develop knowledge. Research is an operationalization of the method used to obtain scientific knowledge or what is called the scientific method

(Darmawan, 2014). In a broad sense, the term methodology refers to the processes, principles, and procedures used to approach problems and seek answers to these problems.

The method used in this research is the descriptive method. This study describes and interprets data relating to facts, circumstances, variables, and phenomena during the research and presents them as they are. Zuldafril (in Wiguna, 2022) said, “descriptive method is data collected in the form of words, pictures and not numbers, besides that everything collected, is likely to be the key to what is being studied.”

So, this descriptive method is a method that describes an event, object, and situation as clearly as possible without affecting the object under study. Descriptive is done on the “as is” description of the factors involved in the problem. Therefore, the descriptive method in this study is used to describe and describe existing conditions or relationships, ongoing opinions, ongoing processes, consequences or effects that occur, or (placeholder) trends that are developing during the learning process (Wiguna, 2022).

The purpose of descriptive research is to make systematic, factual, and accurate predictions about the facts and characteristics of a particular population or area (Suryabrata, 2003).

The steps that have been carried out in this study are as follows:

- To determine the purpose of this research, the researchers want to know the difficulty level of STKIP Pamane Talino students using the Google Classroom application in the new normal period.
- Data was collected by distributing questionnaires via Google form to 59 students as the sample in the study.
- In addition, data was also obtained through online interviews with three students.
- Determine the sample for the questionnaire distributed to all students, while a sample of 3 students with low, medium, and high achievement levels was taken for the interview.
- Tools or observation techniques the researchers made are ten questions regarding students’ difficulties and opinions in using the Google Classroom application.
- After the data is collected, the data is analyzed using critical analysis.
- The last activity is to make a research report based on the results of the data analysis.

The research method used in this research is the descriptive method. Sudaryono (in Wiguna, 2022) states that description is shown to describe a situation or phenomenon as they are. Descriptive research is research on problems in the form of facts. The data sources in this study were students in the Extensive Reading class of second-semester students of the English Education Study Program, STKIP Pamane Talino. Data collection techniques used were

indirect communication techniques, direct communication techniques, and documentary study techniques. The data analysis technique used in this research was critical analysis. The data obtained will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis to make it easier to read and understand. The sequence of steps taken begins by describing the results of the interviews and questionnaires that have been distributed. Then calculate the percentage of answers from each indicator. After calculating the percentage of answers for each indicator, conclusions are drawn from the study results.

Critical analysis techniques include activities to reveal the level of difficulty of online learning during lectures. Using the Google Classroom application in the teaching and learning process that occurred in the classroom during the research. The analysis results were used to determine the difficulty level of using the Google Classroom application in online learning.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This research was conducted in the second semester of the Extensive Reading class with 59 students. This online learning activity was carried out for four months, the first month of learning was carried out offline, but because the COVID-19 situation had not completely passed, government policy instructed that the learning process be online. When conditions have returned to normal at the end of the even semester, students return to face-to-face learning in class.

During online learning, the application used is Google Classroom because this application is complete and easy to use and does not require much money. Most students living in the villages began moving to urban areas in the Landak district, but some stayed there for financial reasons. While using Google Classroom, all materials have been prepared in the application, including the Google Meet link, and the lecturer has prepared on the device. IT-based learning certainly requires good classrooms and adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as electricity and internet connection.

However, it turns out that there are still around 2,275 villages in Indonesia that have not yet had electricity (Kholisdinuka, 2021). In addition, around 12,000 villages are not yet connected to the internet (Liputan6.com, 2021). These facts must be an afterthought for those in power, especially in education. This is because the quality of a school is also influenced by the sufficient elements of facilities and infrastructure that are well-managed (Asiyai, 2012; Boeskens et al., 2020). Therefore, efforts to improve facilities and infrastructure must be pursued properly (Wisman & Kurniawan, 2020).

The results of distributing questionnaires to students showed various responses regarding online learning using Google Classroom in remote areas. Eleven students (29.7 %) of 59 respondents disagreed on whether online learning using Google Classroom can be conducted despite the limited facilities. This number is bigger than those who really agreed (8.1 %) but smaller than those who agreed (62.2%).

Meanwhile, a similar number shows whether online learning using Google Classroom in remote areas is simpler and easier than other online platforms. 24.3% of the respondents disagreed. Even 2.7 % of students really disagreed that using Google Classroom is easier to access in remote areas. However, the number who agreed is still dominant, with 67.6%. Summarizing the students' responses, 27% of them experienced difficulty in having online learning using Google Classroom, as shown in the following figure.

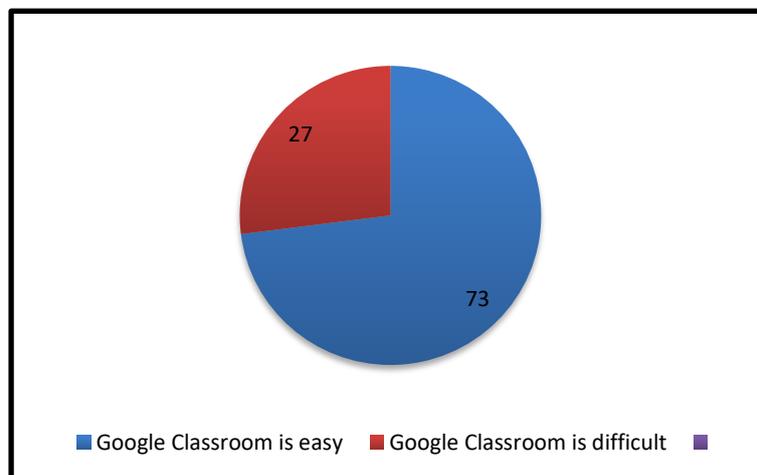


Figure 1: The Result of the Student's Questionnaire

Figure 1 shows that out of 59 students who answered ten questions about the difficulties experienced while using Google Classroom, 73% of students said they could use the Google Classroom application easily. In contrast, 27% of students have difficulty using the application. From the result above, this research recommends using Google Classroom for online learning in the remote area.

Meanwhile, the interview also shows that the students enjoy learning using the Google Classroom application. The researchers took several quotes from students interviewed.

#### Quote 1

(Student 1: While studying using Google Classroom, I can do other work in the same place, for example, helping parents keep the shop).

(Mahasiswa 1: "Selama belajar dengan menggunakan Google Classroom, saya bisa mengerjakan pekerjaan yang lain di tempat yang sama, misalnya membantu orang tua menjaga warung").

The first quote shows that students could do other work while studying using Google Classroom, like helping their parents take care of the shop.

### **Quote 2**

*(Mahasiswa 2: “Ketika saya belajar dengan menggunakan Google Classroom saya juga bisa membantu Mamak mengerjakan pekerjaan rumah, seperti menjaga adik, menjemur karet dan juga memasak jamur kulat sawit”).*

(Student 2: When I study using Google Classroom, I can also help my mother with the housework, such as looking after younger siblings, drying rubber, and cooking palm toadstool mushrooms).

Student 2 responded similarly to the interview, saying that studying via Google Classroom enabled them to help with the house chores or look after their younger ones.

### **Quote 3**

*Mahasiswa 3: “Dengan belajar menggunakan Google Classroom pulsa yang saya gunakan masih bisa terjangkau karena pulsa yang digunakan tidak terlalu menguras uang saku.”*

(Student 3: By learning to use Google Classroom, the voucher I use can still be reached because the voucher used does not drain my pocket money too much).

Firstly, students can do two or more jobs while studying. Secondly, if they use Google Classroom, students can help ease the burden on parents from an economic point of view and in terms of daily work. Thirdly, they are not too burdened with quota fees. Fourthly, material files are automatically saved to be used properly whenever they are needed.

Based on the results of interviews with students, it is known that the average answers from students during interviews think that online learning using the Google Classroom application is very helpful and effective. These findings correspond to Umairah & Zulfah (2020), who found that the average score of students' motivation in online learning using Google Classroom is 87.83. From the findings, it can be concluded that the learning process using the Google Classroom online application is useful and feasible.

## **CONCLUSION**

Researchers used several aspects to assess the difficulty level of using Google Classroom. The aspects used in this study include (1) availability of facilities and infrastructure, (2) students' achievement, and (3) affordability of costs. The difficulty level of online learning using Google Classroom shows good results. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire survey and the results of student interviews. The questionnaire results show 76%

for the ease of using the Google Classroom application in online learning, which can be categorized as good. So it can be said that using the Google Classroom application went well as expected.

This qualitative research describes the use of the Google Classroom online application in the online learning process for STKIP Pamane Talino Students in the Second Semester of the English Education Study Program. Based on the research results, some suggestions that can be submitted are as follows. Lecturers should use varied learning methods so that learning is more interesting. One of them is by using the Google Classroom application. Lecturers should motivate students who are passive in the learning process by providing special guidance so that students are more skilled in using the Google Classroom application. The next research can be done using other applications that make students feel comfortable using the application.

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