

## MAINTAINING QUALITY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING & TESTING ACROSS THE GLOBE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<i>Language Teaching</i> <i>Language Testing</i> <i>Maintain quality</i> <i>Online Learning</i> <i>Covid-19 Pandemic</i>	This desk research aims at investigating how ESL/EFL teachers across the world maintain their quality of teaching and testing. This study will compare the strategies used by teachers in various countries to maintain the quality of teaching and testing English as second and foreign language. Not only the differences and similarities of the methods used by the teachers in the virtual classroom, but also the testing strategies used in online mode. This study shows that various online media were used to deliver teaching and testing. In addition, collaboration within stakeholders is necessary to create innovation that reached wider communities and areas. The strategies are mostly similar across countries because they used online media and program. However, the characteristics of educational system within countries should be considered in determining the strategies used to maintain English language teaching and testing.
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### INTRODUCTION

During the pandemics, technology is a critical tool for providing educational, psychological, spiritual, and medical advice and support to parents, educators, and students. When students and teachers are isolated, quarantined, or locked down as a result of health crises, technology is critical for connection and communication. The use of technology can help with case reporting, testing, and social distance, all of which are important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. As a result, with the help of technology, learners and educators may remain productive and educationally engaged, reducing boredom and the risk of becoming Covidiots during pandemic lockdowns. Online education, student-teacher interactions, connection, and communication are all aided by the usage of educational technologies. It improves the quality of teaching and learning, as well as content production, course distribution, evaluations, and feedback (Onyema, Sen, Obafemi, & Asayed, 2020).

From country to country and school to school, the ability to innovate, adapt, and support education personnel vary. Many schools have been compelled to be creative and come up with

inventive and practical solutions to give instruction and ensure that learning may take place remotely as a result of school closures (Reimers, F. 2020). The government across countries collaborated with schools and teachers to provide facilities for online learning (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). A countless resource for English language curriculum are available online to support teachers including English language teachers in various countries (Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra, & Tuominen, 2020). Across the globe, there are various research that have done by experts or organizations to investigate the best practices of online teaching and learning. This is essential because this study will assist educational practitioners to design lesson that accommodate students' needs.

This paper is aimed at finding out what are the strategies used by language teachers to maintain the quality of their teaching and testing during the pandemic. Then, the similarities and differences of strategies used by the countries across the world be analyzed. Documents and studies from various countries will be analyzed to gain the data.

## **METHOD**

This study used qualitative approach with document analysis. Document analysis is a method of systematically studying and evaluating documents, including printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-based) material. Document analysis is essential to examine and interpret material in order to extract meaning, gain insight, and develop empirical knowledge. Superficial examination, thorough examination, and interpretation are all steps in document analysis. It is a type of qualitative research that employs a systematic method for analysing documentary material and responding to specific research questions. Document analysis, like other qualitative research methodologies requires several reviews, examinations, and interpretations of data in order to get meaning and empirical knowledge of the construct under investigation. Documents from journal articles and reports from recognized organizations will be analysed to extract the data of this research. The content analyse was conducted to reveal the strategies used by language teachers to maintain quality of their teaching and testing. Then, the similarities and differences of the strategies will be discussed. The relevance of documents to the study problem and purpose should was determined. In this study, the documents should discuss about the strategies to maintain language teaching and testing. In addition, the validity, credibility, accuracy, and representativeness of the chosen papers was also considered.

Finding the documents for the study is the first step in doing a document analysis. A number of aspects was examined while choosing documents. When determining which documents to include, there are four points to consider (Flick, 2018):

1. Authenticity

The degree to which a document is authentic. The authenticity of the document was determined by looking at the consistency of the content, number of errors made and its use as a primary source.

2. Credibility

The degree to which a document is error-free. In addition, the reputation of the producers or publishers was also considered to ensure the credibility.

3. Representativeness

How common is a document. This document must be commonly accepted and cited by other scientific journals.

4. Meaning

The document should be significant and it is determined by looking at the content and the impacts.

All these steps were done to analyse the document in this research to gain a valid data.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Various countries have done innovations to respond to Covid-19 Pandemic over countries to maintain quality of teaching and testing. For example, Bangladesh and Pakistan used smartphones to enhance literacy and numeracy, Egypt used digital knowledge bank, India used home-based learning programmes, Indonesia used digital application, Liberia and Sierra Leone used radio broadcast, Mexico produced instructional guidelines for learning at home and independent measurement for assessment, Norway used digital media to assess students' competences, Saudi Arabia created e-learning platform, Uganda published materials for real-time teaching, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland used tutorials to accelerate learning, and Uruguay created various innovation for public education system (Reimers & Operti, 2021).

These innovations were initiated either from school level or government level. Many education-related businesses are making their tools and solutions available for free in order to

assist instructors and students. There was a mix of asynchronous and synchronous forms of instruction (Moorhouse, 2020). A collaboration with various organizations such as non-government organizations and international agencies were also essential to produce well-grounded innovations. This collaboration is important because initiative from single entity cannot reach wider academic communities. If school initiates the innovation, it may reach the school citizens only. When the government works alone, they cannot access other facilities or experts that owned by other organizations or agencies. Therefore, collaboration will have huge impacts because all parties work together to synchronize their resources in response to the pandemic.

### **Maintaining the Quality of English Language Teaching**

In terms of maintaining language teaching quality, several countries have unique innovations which response to the characteristics of education system and learners within the countries.

In South Korea, Yonsei University recorded video lectures, real-time telelectures, and other learning tools in place of face-to-face classrooms. This is important to avoid anxiety of the student because this country has the most high-pressure and competitive education systems in the world (Petrie et al., 2020). In Korea, one unique feature of remote teaching is the support provided by the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), a public instructional television and radio network that has long provided a diverse range of educational programming. As a reaction to COVID-19, EBS has quickly developed and distributed online materials, resources, and learning platforms, with the support of the government and the Ministry of Education constructs their own English For Foreign Learners (EFL) Program (Yi & Jang, 2020).

In Singapore, the government regulates three-pronged approach to engage learners online (Fung, 2020). First, Student-teacher interaction is strengthened by providing channel to ask questions and comments during classes. Second, responding to students real-time responses during classes. Students' real time comments give teachers significant insight into their thoughts and help understanding students' mastery of the material. These real-time reactions allow teachers to adjust the following lessons to the students' level of knowledge and keep them engaged. Third, take advantage of student interaction. The classroom experience is to guarantee that students are more comfortable interacting, asking questions, and contributing in

groups than they are in vast lecture halls. Incorporating group work into virtual classes is even more critical. Students can strengthen their grasp of the materials by working in groups.

In China, teachers used several resources and incorporate some classroom best practices, such as encouraging small group discussion, using a discussion board, and ensuring that assessments are secure (Shanghai Education, 2020). Various multimedia channels, including as television, radio, magazines, websites, and mobile apps, have been utilized to help parents and teachers engage with their children at home while they learn. The government of China introduced "Class in the Air" using computers, tablets, mobile phones, and television sets. They could also use a specialized webcast room and other social media to connect with their teachers (Shanghai Education, 2020). To reach a large number of students, the government provides learning opportunities through educational television programs. Teachers created online video lessons. Teacher training was provided to assist teachers in developing new abilities and shifting their teaching approaches from face-to-face to online teaching, as well as incorporating those courses into their teachings imaginatively. Teachers, students, and parents, particularly those who did not attend top institutions, praised the "Class in the Air" for providing simple access to high-quality educational resources. These strategies include delivering immediate feedback to students who are having, as well as devising online and offline activities to pique their interest. English lecturers, for example, included impromptu speeches, showcasing exceptional homework, exchanging reading assignments, and uploading images of compositions to share. In a live session, for example, teachers would prepare certain questions based on the previous lesson, which students would be required to answer when they entered the online classes (Shanghai Education, 2020).

India has established courses to reach out to all learners via the internet, radio, and television through a number of programs. Digital classrooms have supplanted traditional classrooms, with teachers instructing students using online communication systems. However, providing excellent education through distant learning remains a challenge, as it needs educated teachers with the skills and knowledge to provide a seamless learning experience using ICT or Information and Communication Technologies (Falt & Senapaty, 2020). India had online classrooms called interactive teaching. Learning something new through online schooling is possible. People of various ages can learn at their own pace, without inhibitions, and without jeopardizing their other duties thanks to online classes. With the introduction and

widespread use of COVID-19 in India, online education has already reached the most basic levels of education. The online option is a need in this pandemic circumstance. It has provided students with education without requiring them to travel and it is more flexible as well. The students enjoyed the adjustment of using various multimedia resources to learn language such as zoom, radio broadcast, google classroom and others.

In Indonesia, the teachers employ a variety of applications and platforms that can be divided into eight categories including a learning management system, a chat and messaging system, a video conference, a content creator, an evaluation, video streaming and sharing, an online learning provider, and an additional resource game. There are teachers who used both synchronous and asynchronous methods for online learning. The synchronous method denotes that teachers conduct online learning at set times throughout the week. The asynchronous method, on the other hand, indicates that the teachers conduct online learning over a longer period of time, such as one week. In addition to online educational resources, video conferencing applications, media applications, social media, and other social features can assist parents in coping with the availability of student teaching materials at home. To address this issue, the Indonesian government created an Education TV program called “learning from home” through the government TV network (TVRI) to assist children learn from home for school levels from early childhood to secondary school (Rasmitadila, Rachmadtullah, Djuanda, & Samsudin, 2020). As a result, asynchronous mode is more adaptable than synchronous mode. However, because their institutions need it, the majority of teachers conduct their online learning in synchronous mode. Teachers can then use ready-made materials such as PowerPoint slides, YouTube videos, and Word documents, or they can develop their own materials such as videos, images, PowerPoint slides, Word documents, and PDF documents. Teachers submit the materials to learning management systems like Google Classroom and Schoology, or they share them via messaging apps like WhatsApp. After that, the teachers use Zoom, for example, to explain the materials. Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture gives each school the opportunity to select their chosen online learning systems (MOEC, 2020a). It does, however, provide a free online learning portal called ‘*Rumah Belajar*’ or Learning Home and an online-learning sharing platform for instructors called ‘Program Guru Berbagi’ or Teacher Sharing Program to encourage information exchange. *Program Guru Berbagi* shares lesson with teachers all around Indonesia, while *Rumah Belajar* provides

learning resources and a communication feature for its users. For locations where internet access is good, the government works with TVRI, the state-owned television broadcaster, to offer educational materials for a few months through the "*Belajar di Rumah*" or learning from home program (Azzahra, 2020)

There are several similarities and differences of strategies used by countries across the world to maintain the quality of English language teaching. All countries develop their own innovation to response to the unprecedented health crisis by collaborating with public and private organizations to help teachers and learners gain the learning outcomes and reduce learning loss. Various types of media were used such as phone, TV or Radio broadcast, Internet-based media such as YouTube, Learning Management System such as Google Classroom, Live conference media such as Zoom and Google Meet. In addition, teachers also work hand in hand by making a group for sharing information and innovations. One particular differences that emerged during the document analysis was characteristics of the educational institution and its citizens. These characteristics determined the innovation and the impacts. A country may have similar innovation but it might be used in different ways. For example, in developed countries, they launch program for learning at home which reached all parts of the country because of their advanced facilities. However, in developed or underdeveloped countries, it is a challenge because the Internet is not accessible for all people and areas within the country.

### **Maintaining the Quality of English Language Testing**

In order to maintain language testing quality, alternative techniques for assessing the same learning outcomes were required because certain assessments could no longer take place as intended.

Despite the contingency mechanisms in place, all learning outcomes must be attained and demonstrated. A policy was written to allow for more flexibility in the approval process for any adjustments that were required. This ensured that any adjustments to the assessment were reasonable and equitable. Students were also given guidance on how to use the tools and how to get ready to learn in an online setting, in addition to teaching professionals who needed training. Academic counsellors also spent time speaking with students on time management,

procrastination management, and the fact that the online learning environment can be distracting for some students (Lim, 2020).

A test is a major deal in China. The idea of test security is a significant problem at educational institution. One of innovation done China is by having students compose the assessments. They must not only write the questions but also provide the desired response as well as an explanation of how it pertains to the standard. They are given a grade based on how challenging their test items are. The level of the questions that students have come up with has astounded the teachers. Then, the teachers created various versions of tests using questions from different classes to increase the complexity of searching up and sharing answers (Holstrom, 2020). To keep students involved, teachers created interactive exercises or multiple-choice questions in which they can participate and receive real-time feedback. Teachers continued to reflect on the online teaching process in order to change and improve their teaching approaches. A third-party application that can be used to enhance online assignments and tests, maintain track of all activities and results of students' online learning, and serve as a formative assessment reference. Teachers can then track their pupils' progress and adjust their instruction accordingly. Shanghai's successes reflect not only the continuation of education, but also a new knowledge and exciting experience of online and open education thanks to the combined efforts of the government, educational institutions, and the people (UNESCO, 2020).

In Indonesia, to assess the students' mastery of the material, the teachers produce online quizzes in the style of multiple choice, essays, and true or false alternatives. Some teachers used project-based learning in their online classes, Some the teachers also assigned assignments and projects to the students. Teachers conduct discussions with students in order to obtain a better understanding and refine the students' lack of knowledge. Teachers also conducted question-and-answer sessions with students in order to engage them and help them address their learning challenges. Following that, the lecturers provide personal feedback on the pupils' work. The feedback is intended to assist students in making personal progress in their study. Finally, the teachers assigned a grade to each student's assessment (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020).

There are several similarities and differences of strategies used by countries across the world to maintain the quality of English language testing. Online assessment can take advantage of modern network technology to quickly transfer and analyses large amounts of



data, resulting in increased efficiency and effectiveness in terms of test generation, dissemination, scoring, and reporting. When compared to traditional evaluation, it saves time, human labour, expenses, and other costs in a variety of ways. The ultimate goal, however, should be to achieve more personalised and effective learning. In online assessment, security is a more pressing concern. There are two parts to the safety. One is the confidentiality and security of assessment tools, testing response data, and other outcomes, which must not be disclosed. The other goal is to make sure that students answer questions honestly and to avoid and detect cheating. (Su, 2020). The differences that the countries used are on the method where several countries used independent assessment constructed by students, while teachers in the countries prefer to construct their own test or assessment to be given to the students using various online platforms.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, countries across the world have done countless efforts to innovate their teaching and testing strategies to minimize the bad impacts of the pandemic to the students. In terms of maintain language teaching quality, the innovation requires a collaboration between all stakeholders within countries including, government, public and private organizations, schools, universities, even teachers and students. Various types of media were used such as phone, TV or Radio broadcast, Internet-based media such as YouTube, Learning Management System such as Google Classroom, Live conference media such as Zoom and Google Meet. In addition, teachers also work hand in hand by making a group for sharing information and innovations. However, these strategies were designed by considering the characteristics of the educational system within countries. In order to maintain language testing quality, online platform was used because online assessment can take advantage of modern network technology to quickly transfer and analyses large amounts of data, resulting in increased efficiency and effectiveness in terms of test generation, dissemination, scoring, and reporting. When compared to traditional evaluation, it saves time, human labour, expenses, and other costs in a variety of ways. The ultimate goal, however, should be to achieve more personalised and effective learning. In online assessment, security is a more pressing concern. There are two parts to the safety. One is the confidentiality and security of assessment tools, testing response

data, and other outcomes, which must not be disclosed. The other goal is to make sure that students answer questions honestly and to avoid and detect cheating. (Su, 2020). However, each country has their own strategies to deal with assessment issue. Some countries used independent assessment constructed by students, while teachers in the countries prefer to construct their own test or assessment to be given to the students using various online platforms. It is highly recommended that teachers should join professional development activities and maintain collaboration with other fellow teachers. In times of crisis, out-of-school learning communities can be a significant source for mutual professional assistance.

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