Managing Online Classes in The Covid-19: Pre-Service Language Teachers’ Perceptions

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Abstract. The shifting of offline to online classroom during Covid-19 Outbreak arose classroom management issues, especially in rural areas. From that point, this study aims to investigate pre-service language teachers’ perceptions on managing online classrooms. Those respondents were five third graders in a university in Garut, West Java who were conducting pre-service teaching programs. To achieve the goal of this study, qualitative research in the form of a case study design was employed. The data were collected using semi-structured interview. The data were then analyzed using Creswell’s inductive analysis framework (2012) framed by the theory of classroom management from (Simonsen et al, 2014). As the result, teachers viewed that having a good classroom management is a must. Yet, they still needed to upgrade their self-concept as the teachers, as well as knowledge and skills in managing online classes; paying attention on the classroom conduciveness, translating the lesson plan into online teaching practice, as well as considering the quantity and quality of the task. The practical implication of this study is that relevant trainings may be addressed to pre-service teachers before they came to schools. Specifically, those trainings should cover the self-concept of pre-service teachers regarding their pedagogical competences, technological literacy, as well as the belief as the prospective teachers at the very first place.

Keywords: classroom management; covid-19; online-classes; pre-service teachers

Mengelola Kelas Online di Masa Covid-19: Persepsi Guru Bahasa Prajabatan


Kata kunci: pengelolaan kelas; covid-19; kelas daring; guru prajabatan
INTRODUCTION
Managing classroom is one of a teacher's professional competencies. In this competency, teachers ought to have a good control in the classroom (Milner & Tenore, 2010; Suyuti, 2018). Cooper & Jacobs (2011) also emphasize that the teacher’s ability in creating care and respect to engage students is one indicator of a good classroom management (see also Perso & Hayward, 2020). Furthermore, teachers need to manage the classroom seen from three aspects; physical classroom design, classroom routines, and positively stated expectation (Simonsen at al, 2014). Seen from physical classroom design, a teacher has a work to consider the appropriates of materials given to the students (Cooler-Meek, Johnson, Sanetti & Minami, 2019). Peculiarly, the teacher should be thoughtful in adapting the materials in terms of the complexity level in accordance with students’ age, accessible source, time allotment, and others (see Simonsen at al, 2014). In addition, in classroom routines, the teacher needs to set the effective learning time management, the choice of students’ learning activities, as well as the consideration to do scaffolding to students (see also (Cooler-Meek, Johnson, Sanetti & Minami, 2019). Last, positively stated expectation is something to do with what students’ behavior towards the teaching activities performed by the teacher. Therefore, the expectation will be about the learning tasks, modelling, as well as the teacher’s feedback (see also Simonsen at al, 2014; Fajriah, 2019).

However, it is difficult to manage classrooms. This claim is based on the evidence that many teachers, including language teachers, find that classroom management is not easy (Nurjamin & Nurjamin, 2017). One of the problems is the teacher’s ability in tackling students’ misbehavior (Keser & Yafuz, 2018; Rozimela, 2016; Sanli, 2019) which includes noise, low motivation, impoliteness. This is assumed to have hindered the learning process or the attainment of the learning goals.

In addition to that, the shifting from offline to online learning might have added a burden for teachers (Nurjamin et al, 2019). Many issues come up regarding online classroom management, such as, how to determine the strategies of teaching, how to assess/ evaluate students’ works (Jacob, 2014), as well as how to deal with technical barriers such as the availability of supporting tools and the stability of signal. It is also reported that teachers also still have problems on their personality in the teaching practice (Brooks et al, 2003) and teaching styles (Marks, 2005). Other problems of teachers in online learning are also about their teaching preparation, communication strategies, and the teaching procedure (Kebritchi, Santiague & Lipschuets, 2017). This means that teachers still have a lot to deal with in managing online classroom.

Pre-service teachers might face more issues. They might have to adjust the knowledge they bring from their own class to the real practice in classrooms (see Kagan, 1992). In addition to that, pre-service teachers have to maintain their relations with the other pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, as well as the lecturers (as the supervisor). These relations are essential to their professional and academic development (Lathifah, 2014). In other words, the tasks of being pre-service teachers are so numerous.

Studies related to this issue have been conducted by many researchers. Some of the research focused on the discussions of effective classroom management (Parsonson, 2012, Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Other studies emphasized teachers’ strategies in managing classrooms (Ulfa et al, 2019; Habibi et al, 2017). Some studies have also been conducted in Indonesia investigating pre-service teaching programs (Ahmad et al; 2019; Hapsari & Ena, 2019). However, most studies focus on portraying pre-service teaching practice in offline classrooms. The previous studies indicate that most studies place an emphasis on pre-service teachers’ need of assistance and the portrayal of classroom management as well as the practicum of pre-service teaching in general.
That is why this study focuses on online classroom management since the studies centering on classroom management in online setting are still very few.

**METHOD**
This study was carried out under case study design based on three considerations (see Creswell, 2012). First, this study was conducted in a small city which is assumed essential and unique to be investigated since online learning is still a new shift in schools. Second, this research was based on a case that online learning brings many issues among language teachers in this region. Third, the data were collected from the natural setting, meaning that there is no any data manipulation or intervention. Besides, the data were collected using semi-structured interview since it enabled researchers to explore the questions more comprehensively (see Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). In this study, five pre-service language teachers in one of educational universities in West Java, Indonesia served as the research participants. Those five respondents were selected due to two reasons. First, the academic record reports that they got predicate B and A for the subject of Teaching simulation subject. Second, they did the teaching practice in schools which have different accreditation score; A and B accredited senior high schools. Particularly, the respondents are labelled as Respondent 1 (R1), Respondent 2 (R2), Respondent 3 (R3), Respondent 4 (R4), and Respondent 5 (R5). The gained data in this study were then analyzed by using Creswell's framework (2012) consisting of data reduction, data analysis, and data interpretation.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**
This part elaborates findings of this study. Particularly, this section is divided into five points of teachers’ perceptions on managing online classrooms, consisting of creating conducive environment, giving tasks, implementing lesson plan, making agreement with students, fostering students’ activeness.

**Creating conducive environment**
First, only few pre-service teachers perceived that they paid attention on building conducive environment. As an example, R1 said, “di kelas praktik ini, saya memang kurang memperhatikan kondisi kelas karena jujur ini masih baru buat saya. Saya cenderung lebih berfokus pada bagaimana materi saya dapat disampaikan.” This statement means that the attention to make students enjoy the class was not put as the point to consider since he centered on how to deliver materials. This finding is similar to what was said by R 4, “Terkait kondusifitas kelas, saya hanya memikirkan bagaimana anak bisa masuk kelas saja, karena pembelajaran online ini sangat kompleks di sekolah yang bukan di kota ya, banyak aspek yang saya perhatikan seperti ada anak yang ga punya HP, kuota. Itu pun belum bisa saya pecahkan.” R4’s statement meant that she tended to think how students could take a part in the learning process since many students had problems in joining the online classroom. Put simply, due to highest attention on the technical things, the intention to create the enjoyable and conducive classroom is not big.

As the summary of the finding as mentioned above, teachers perceived that they could not develop a conducive classroom atmosphere. This claim is due to the difficulties they tackled that many students are restricted in having the internet access or the technological tools supporting this kind of learning. The data were confirmed by a previous study (Efriana, 2021) that teachers had a little control on the online classroom management. This evidence was also supported by Rozimela (2016) & Holmqvist (2019) that one of big problems faced by pre-service teachers is lack of knowledge to manage the classroom.

As response to the above-mentioned data, Allal (2020), Evertson & Emmer (2009) recommend that the teacher should determine some rules to create an optimal classroom condition. Two alternatives are offered (Gillet-Swan, 2017) to attain a good online classroom in a remote area. First, choosing the most appropriate teaching platform which could be easily accessed by students in the small region. Second,
facilitating students to communicate more such as, using e-mail, online chat in social media, or limited offline consultation which could increase the students’ engagement and participation in the online learning. Aldrup et al (2020) also suggest teachers consider the emotional condition of students in order to keep students interested in the teaching-learning process (see also Ali et al, 2020).

**Giving tasks**

In giving tasks, a half number of respondents perceived that they have fulfilled the attainment of time allotment, quantity as well as the complexity level of tasks during online learning. As an example, R2 said, “tentu saja, waktu jumlah soal serta tingkat kesulitan soal diperhatikan, karena tugas itu harus balance dengan segala sesuatu nya.” This utterance is also similar to R4’s answer, “Pasti, karena itu tugas guru sib ya apalagi saya kan dapat juga mata kuliah tentang asemn jadi ya aspek itu harus diperhatikan, temasuk saat pembelajaran daring ini.” Those two answers indicate that they already knew about aspects to consider before giving the task. Another respondent, R1, shown his perception that tasks in online learning should be not as many as in offline learning, “saya punya pandangan bahwa di kelas online ini, anak jangan diberi banyak beban tugas, sehagiananya saya katakan, kelas online banyak sekali kendala teknis.” It means that this participant preferred not to give so many tasks to the students. However, the other respondents claimed that they sometime forgot to think the aspect of quantity and quality of tasks since they used the task from the textbooks. As an example, R5 said, “Terkadang saya lupa karena tugas biasanya itu ada di buku teks atau LKS, sehingga saya pakai itu saja, tapi saya rasa itu penting untuk memikirkan apa yang Anda sebutkan.” It means that the teacher did not pay attention on the task giving since it had been already provided in the textbooks.

The data showing the efforts of half of pre-service to give tasks in online learning is hand in hand with Simonsen at al (2014)’s that teachers need to consider many things before giving the assignment to students. However, the preservice teacher’s perception is not followed by the sufficient knowledge and practice. The data are supported by a study conducted by Metin (2013) & Michalsky (2021) that many teachers have problems in determining the what topics of assignment should be and how to assess that task. For this issue, many studies recommend alternatives to carry out by teachers in giving tasks during online learning. As an instance, Gaytan & McEwen (2007) in their study propose five techniques in task giving; projects, portofolio, peer-assessment, self-evaluation, and weekly assignment with immediate feedback. It was also strengthened by the research report that it is necessary to get students involved in determining and evaluating the tasks in online classroom through variety task assessments; such as peer assessment and interactive assessment (Fontanillas, Carbonell, & Catasus, 2016).

**Translating lesson plan into teaching practice**

In this point, surprisingly, most respondents perceived that the classroom activities were almost not reflecting the lesson plan. R3 said; ‘RPP saya ada dan itu sangat penting cuma memang seringkali tidak sama pada saat pelaksanaan di kelas, apalagi ini on-line kan.” R1 also had the similar answer; “kalau untuk pencapaian materi seperti sudah sesuai RPP namun untuk kegiatan kaya langska-langkah, metode itu kadang ga sama karena satu dan lain hal.” Those two responses mean that despite the understanding on lesson plan, they still did not implement what had been written in the lesson plan to the practice. These data are supported by Emiliasari & Jubaedah’s study (2019) that teachers did not implement what had been written in the lesson plan, as reflected in some activities which were skipped. This result is also confirmed by Dorovolomo, Phan, & Maebuta (2010) & Sudibyo (2020) that there is an assumption among pre-service teachers that teaching planning is not important to be paid attention. Another study also reveals that during Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesian teachers had matters in the lesson plan preparation, peculiarly in determining the
teaching method and platforms (Wulandari et al, 2021), and in adapting the lesson plan to the activities in the teaching platform (Fitriani, 2021).

More than that, these findings were not parallel to a study’s data telling that the quality of lesson plan has positive correlation to the teaching implementation (Iqbal et al, 2021).

Different from the above-mentioned data, R2 considered himself had implemented the lesson plan into her teaching. She added her statement," Ya, saya rasa sudah karena saya seringkali konsultasi terkait RPP ke dosen pemutuh, juga ke guru pamong, ada evaluasi termasuk juga pikir sudah sesuai sib."

It means that during the Pre-service teaching practice, the respondent got the intensive guidance from the in-service teacher and the lecturer. Further, the respondent believed that her teaching performance in the classroom had been on the track since she got gradual evaluation. Nevertheless, this finding is still insufficient since in online teaching, teachers should accommodate the problems of student isolation and the limited committing resource especially to students who mostly live in the rural areas, (Dell, Hobbs, & Miller, 2009).

This finding is correlated to the study’s result (Latifah,2014; Pozo-Rico et al, 2020) that in-service teachers had very prominent role to help pre-service teachers do teaching practicum. More than that, it is also proposed that reflecting writing could be an alternative to employ by the pre-service teachers to get the control form the supervisors, peculiarly lecturers (see Callaway-Cole & Kimble, 2021; Sayagh & Fischl, 2012). More comprehensively, the pre-service teaching practicum is influenced by many factors, two of them are the communication among student-teacher, the school’s teachers and the college’s supervisor, also the relevance between the classroom practice and the course taught in the college (Derakhsan et al, 2020; Kagan, 1992).

All in all, the data as discussed above point out the pre-service teachers’ viewpoint on the sufficiency of solely consulting the lesson plan to the supervisors (lecturers) and in-service teachers. Of course, this perception is not in line with the concept that lesson plan in online learning is more complex since it needs more aspects; such as learning activities, learning platforms, accurate assessments, and the student interaction (see Cicco, 2013).

Making agreement with students

In regards to the classroom rule agreement, the pre-service teachers perceived that they mostly had agreement with their students regarding what they had to obey and what they did not supposed to do in the classroom setting. Particularly, the rule tended to be about the way of behaving that students must be pay attention to. As an example, R5 said; “Semisal siswa harus ontime masuk kelas, mereka harus menyalakan kamera nya di zoom, juga tidak boleh telat mengerjakan tugas, ini sesuai sama arahan guru pamong juga”. Another respondent (R1) also had the similar answer, “Tentu, seperti aturan submit tugas, harus memperhatikan ketika saya mengajar, harus ikut terlibat saat diskusi kelompok, dan lainnya.” In relation to this, R3 also answered, “Di awal pertemuan kan biasanya ada dulu perjanjian dengan anak, semacam negosiasi apa yang harus kita sama sama patuh, kedisiplinan, kesopanan, ya seperti saya kuliah kan gitu karena kan menang ini hanya kelas praktik.”

Generally, those three respondents who also had similar answer with the remain believed in the prominence of constructing agreement with students not only about academic affair but also the attitude. All of the student-teachers considered that students had to know what they should and should not do in the classroom.

The data above show that the respondents have attained their duty to manage the class, particularly in guiding students to obey the class rule (Collier-Meek, Johnson, Sanetti & Minami, 2019). As an extension, the finding telling that pre-service teacher’s choice in the practicum was influenced by what she got in the college emphasized the study (Kagan, 1999; Thomm et al, 2021) that the pre-service teacher’s performance is influenced by the lesson learnt from the college. Nevertheless, there is
something missed in this point. All respondents claimed that the agreements are mostly centered to them as the teachers, meanwhile, it is important to involve students’ views in designing the classroom atmosphere, especially in online learning, since not all students have the same condition one to another (see also Dell, Hobbs, & Miller, 2009); for example, in determining the learning platforms. Likewise, accommodating students’ voice in setting the classroom is pivotal since it influences to attain the goal structures of teaching (Bardach et al, 2021). Not only that, it is also safe to say that the pre-service did not have maximal control to their teaching practice since they felt that the classrooms are not fully theirs. This evidence is in line with a study of Rahmawati et al (2017) that pre-service teachers mostly do not have adequate self-concept as the prospective teachers.

**Students’ activeness**

All respondents perceived that students’ activeness is one of priorities in their teaching practice. R2 said that, ”Selalu saya mencoba membuat anak aktif seperti saya tanya satu-satu.” Similar to this, R4 also claimed, ”Ya itu bagian prioritas karena kalau anak ga aktif itu menunjukkan pembelajaran saya tidak menyenangkan, sehingga saya selalu ajak mereka berdiskusi, dua arah, ga saya aja.”. The statements form R2 and R4 show that they used the technique of asking questions and inviting students into discussion forum as alternatives to dig their activeness. In addition to that, R5 and R3 also had the similar answer that students’ activeness is the key of the successful teaching performance. However, the other respondent (R1) added some statements,” Tapi ga dipungkiri, online learning ini membuat saya kadang bingung gimana cara anak aktif; misal saya panggil di WA ga nyant, atau saya kasi pertanyaan di GC banya itu itu yang jawab.” It means that Online learning sometimes caused the respondent difficult to stimulate students’ activeness in the classroom activities. The data are relevant to Cooper’s (2011) & Wagner et al (2020) that the teacher must be able to create the engaging atmosphere in which students participate actively in the classroom. However, the problem as mentioned by R1 is confirmed by Adedoyin & Soykan (2020) that one of problems faced in online learning is the lack of students’ participation or activeness in the classroom.

For this aspect, any studies have discussed strategies how to help pre-service teachers stimulate the students’ activeness in the classroom. A study done by Hidayat et al (2020) reports that in engaging students, pre-service teachers can explore question types (referential questions, display questions, yes/no questions, also open and close questions) during the teaching practicum.

As response to all above-stated findings and discussions, the role of both institutions (universities and schools) must balance one to another. First, universities have a main duty to facilitate pre-service teachers in having some trainings in relation to the classroom management in online setting. The management is not only on the basic strategies of teaching (teaching materials, teaching platforms, online assessment), but also on the development of their self-concepts as the teachers; for examples, how to have good rapports with students, how to minimize anxiety during the teaching practicum, and how to engage students behaviorally and emotionally in the classroom. Second, schools as represented by the in-service teachers must have a good control in supervising the student-teachers. This stage is completed through regular feedback giving. Good communication with the students-teachers is also important to help give what students need and expect. Put differently, pre-service teachers will positively perceive the online teaching due to their readiness in performing the teaching practice as have been developed previously.

**CONCLUSION**

In spite of the positive perception on managing their online teaching, the pre-service language teachers need to develop their teaching competence. This conclusion is drawn based on the data, telling that they still lack of knowledge and experiences in managing online classroom, especially, in
developing classroom atmosphere, adapting lesson plan to the online teaching scheme, determining the online learning tasks, and making agreement with the students in the distance learning. Hence, the relevant trainings are necessary to address before pre-service teaching practicum begin. This proposal is due to the fact that online teaching conducted in this research site is still newly implemented, considering the students who mostly live in the rural areas. Put simply, the self-concept of pre-service teachers regarding their pedagogical competences, technological literacy, as well as the belief as the prospective teachers has to put at the very first place.

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