Evaluation of Online Learning for English Practice Course in Akademi Telkom Jakarta

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Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has forced all citizens of the world to change their daily activity patterns, starting from the individual level to the government level in the realm of Social, politics, defense and security policies. Various policies to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 in Indonesia were taken in the form of the implementation of WFH (Work from Home), instruction for physical distancing and PSBB (Large-scale social restrictions) in each province and city in Indonesia. With the implementation of those policies, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) took the policy as a guide in dealing with the disease at the education unit level. The Sandhy Putra Telecommunication Engineering Academy of Jakarta (Akatel) participated in breaking the chain of distribution of Covid-19 by imposing WFH and SFH (School from Home) policies since mid-March 2020. Since the enactment of SFH, students have conducted online learning for all courses including English Practice Courses, which in the 2017 curriculum are given for 5 semesters. The purpose of this study was to evaluate English learning in Akatel which was conducted online for 12 weeks (out of a total of 16 weeks of lecture semesters). This study uses a quantitative method with a questionnaire as a method of collecting data. The results showed that the majority of students followed the lectures well even though there were some obstacles in learning process.

Keywords: Online English Learning, Covid-19, Distance Learning, English Learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 pandemic has forced all citizens of the world to change their daily activity patterns, ranging from reducing social activities and wearing masks when they go out of the house; setting various policies in the realm of social, politics, defense and security by the government; taking action to prevent those exposed by the disease by medical workers; prevention of transmission of disease for those who are not exposed to the decision taken by the Indonesian government to implement the so-called "new normal" to keep the economy running while maintaining restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19 [2]. Various policies to break the chain of the spread of the Covid-19 in Indonesia were taken in the form of the implementation of WFH (Work from Home), instruction for physical distancing and PSBB (Large-scale social restrictions) in each province and city in Indonesia.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education throughout the world has led to the widespread closure of all forms of educational institutions both formal and informal. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) on 4 March 2020 suggested the use of distance learning and opened an educational platform that schools and teachers could use to reach students from a distance and limit disruption to education [3]. Globally, the UNESCO monitoring results stated that as per 9 July 2020 data, 110 countries

had implemented a national closure which affected 1,067,590,512 students (61% of the world's student population) [4]. In Indonesia, as per 9th July 2020 data, there were 68,265,787 students whose formal learning activities were affected by COVID-19. In connection with these developments, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) also took policies as a guide in dealing with the disease at each education unit level [1]. The Handbook of Learning Guidelines in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period was issued on 30 June 2020 as a guide for formal Education institutions in dealing with the 'New Normal' in the next school year [5].

The Sandhy Putra Telecommunication Engineering Academy of Jakarta (Akatel) participated in breaking the chain of distribution of Covid-19 by implementing the WFH and SFH (School from Home) policies since mid-March 2020. Since the enactment of SFH, students have conducted online learning for all courses including Practice English. Akatel includes English learning for up to 5 semesters since the 2010 curriculum. Furthermore, the 2017 curriculum along with the RPS (Semester Learning Plan) courses currently implemented at Akatel are not designed for online learning. Therefore, online learning evaluation is the topic of this research with English Practice Courses as the focus of research.

Mursel [6] defines evaluation as a process to find out the success of teaching programs and as an assessment process to find out the difficulties inherent in the learning process. The same thing also stated by Ramayulis [7, p. 400] who defines learning evaluation as an assessment of the competencies that have been achieved by students after conducting the teaching and learning process. Anas Sudijono [8] further suggests three main functions of the evaluation process, which are to measure progress (learning activities), as a support for planning (of teaching) and make improvements (towards aforementioned plan). Learning objectives that have been made should be designed to be achieved in stages so that they can be evaluated on an ongoing basis. That way, we can find out which stages have been reached, which stages are running smoothly and which stages have obstacles during implementation. Djaali et al [9, p. 3] state that evaluation is the process of evaluating something based on the criteria or objective standards that are evaluated.

There are 4 criteria that will be evaluated in this research, namely learning methods, learning materials (RPS), learning assessment methods (UTS and UAS) and the affective aspects of respondents (which are limited to attitudes, interests and self-concepts) of English Practice courses. The evaluation of English learning in Akatel conducted online for 12 weeks (out of a total of 16 weeks of lecture) due to the Covid-19 pandemic is both diagnostic and summative. Diagnostic evaluation is carried out after completing the presentation of a unit of study and aims to identify or examine students' weaknesses and their causal factors [10, p. 200]. It is diagnostic because it is used to identify various obstacles faced by students in the learning process of English Practice courses online. It is expected that the results of this study can be used as input for conducting online English Practice courses in the next semester (in the even semester of 2020/2021 year of academic) which will be carried out in the 'New Normal' period.

II.   RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a sample of 52 Akatel students as respondent who registered in English Practice courses with a composition of 55.8% was first-year students (English Practice 2 course), 9.6% was the second-year students (English Practice 4 course) and 34.6% was final-year students (English Practice 6 course). Questionnaires were given when students have completed the Final Semester Exams so they can provide feedback from their experiences when attending online lectures.

The four-section questionnaire was designed with a total of 30 items in the mixture of open-ended and close-ended format. The first section elicited background information of lecturers' teaching method. The second section entailed the course syllabus. The third section dealt with learning assessment method. All the above were designed in a close-ended question format. The final section consisted of the mixture of open-ended and close-ended formats to investigate students' perceptions and expectations of their participations in online classes of English Language Practice. Other reasons that underlie researcher for choosing survey research are the recurring implementation of PSBB rules for the Jakarta area and SFH (School from Home) learning for Akatel students when this research was conducted.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In addition to impacting the social lives of all citizens of the world, Covid-19 also changed the pattern of implementation of the existing education system. The face-to-face learning model was transformed into a distance learning model (PJJ) as a way to break the spread of the Covid-19 disease. E-learning which is previously still an option becomes a necessity for all formal education institutions even though the curriculum applied in each institution is currently not fully supporting online learning methods, even the blended learning method. In other words, online-based lectures found momentum when the Covid-19 pandemic struck. All campuses and various levels of schools from kindergarten to high school do online learning. Jaya Kumar C. Koran [11] defines e-learning as just any teaching and learning that uses electronic circuits (LAN, WAN, or internet) to convey learning content, interactions, or guidance. Hartley, Rosenberg and Kamarga in Wahyuningsih and Makmur [12, p. 3] describe e-learning as a form of using internet technology and network computers to assist human learning processes.

Even so, this system makes teachers even lecturers have to get out of the comfort zone, especially those who are classified as technology illiterate. In addition to having to master the available educational platforms, they must adapt all face-to-face learning activities to an online version. The workload will increase if the existing curriculum has not been fully optimized for online learning methods.

Telkom Academy of Jakarta uses the 2017 curriculum with an updated RPS but has not yet fully implemented online learning methods. English courses at Telkom Academy of Jakarta are given for 5 consecutive semesters and are not tiered subjects. The evaluation material for this research is the English Practice 2, 4 and 5 offered in the Even semester of the academic year of 2019/2020. There are 4 lecturers who lecture English Practice courses this semester and the respondents of this study are students in the first, second and final year. In general, as Engineering students, respondents do not have problems in terms of operating the gadget but the use of educational platforms is a challenge for them. Especially if each lecturer uses different educational platforms and students must master the user interface of each platform so that learning process runs smoothly.

Full-time online learning at the Telkom Academy of Jakarta began in the 5th week of pre-Midterm test when the effort to break the Covid-19 chain is implemented through PSBB. The implementation of SFH begins with a consensus on the diversity of educational platforms used by lecturers. This was due to the fact that the institution's e-learning platform is not ready to use for SFH implementation. The e-learning platforms that were used are varied from WhatsApp Group, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Trello for assignments and discussions to Zoom or Google Meet for video conferencing. The learning schedule still follows the schedule made by the Academic Administration Section of Akatel for face-to-face meetings, as well as the midterm and final test schedules.

3.1 Learning Method

The learning method in Akatel starts with giving semester learning plan (RPS) to students so that they know what they will learn in the current semester. 86.5% of respondents received information about what they learned through the provision of RPS and 11.5% of respondents only received that information verbally. Only 1.9% did not get RPS on the first day of lecture. Even so, it would be better for all students to get the RPS so that they can make preparations before the lecture begins.
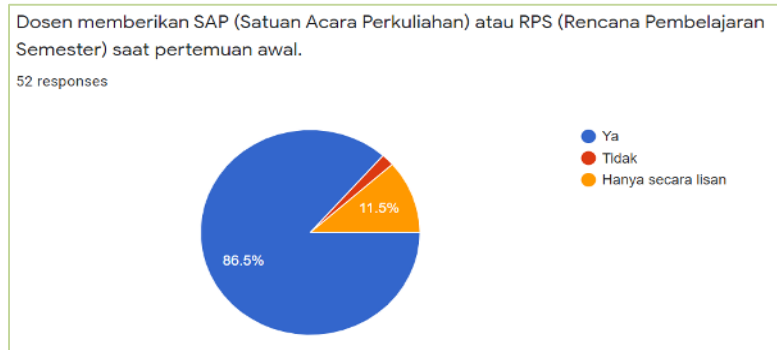
Picture 1. Provision of RPS at the Beginning of Class

The majority of lecturers used Google Classroom as educational platform for online lectures (55.8%), followed by Edmodo (42.3%) and WhatsApp Group (40.4%). Google Classroom and Edmodo have similar teaching features but Google Classroom is more practical and efficient because users do not have to create a new account (only connect it to a Google e-mail account) and teachers can create classes, distribute assignments, assign grades, send feedback and see everything in one place. Students also feel they have no difficulty in understanding the User Interface. About 96.1% of students feel the User Interface of various educational platforms chosen by lecturers is easy to understand.

One of the problems encountered during online lectures is the flexible time in starting and ending lectures. From the results, it can be acknowledged that that lecturers were able to maintain their performance to start classes on time in average.
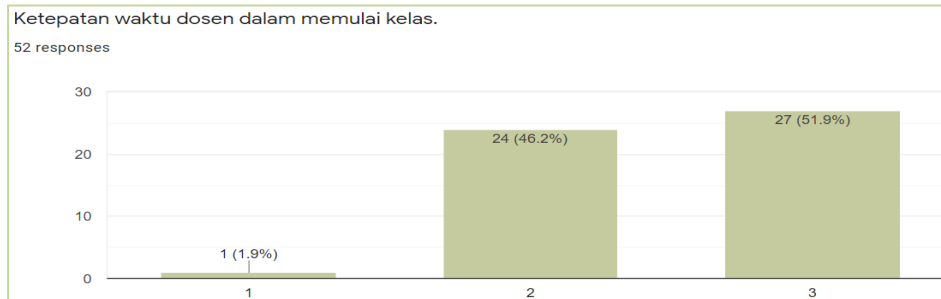

Picture 2. Lecturers' Punctuation in Teaching

According to Majid [13, p. 232], the ability of teachers in teaching is also related to their ability in managing their respective classrooms to the extent that they can apply various classroom activities, teaching methods and learning models. E-Learning is a form of learning method that is perceived to be student centered. From the results of the questionnaire, it was found out that there is a tendency for lecturers in English Practice course to provide independent assignments which could be done individually or in groups.
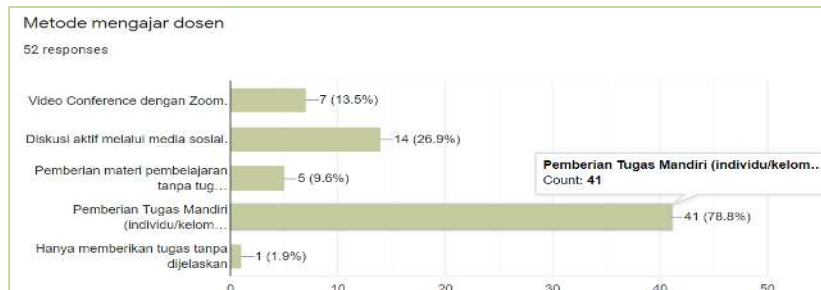
Picture 3. Lecturers' Teaching Methods.

The type of interaction that lecturers choose is to exchange messages interactively through social media (46.2%) or educational platforms (40.4%) together with uploading assignments for the day's lectures.
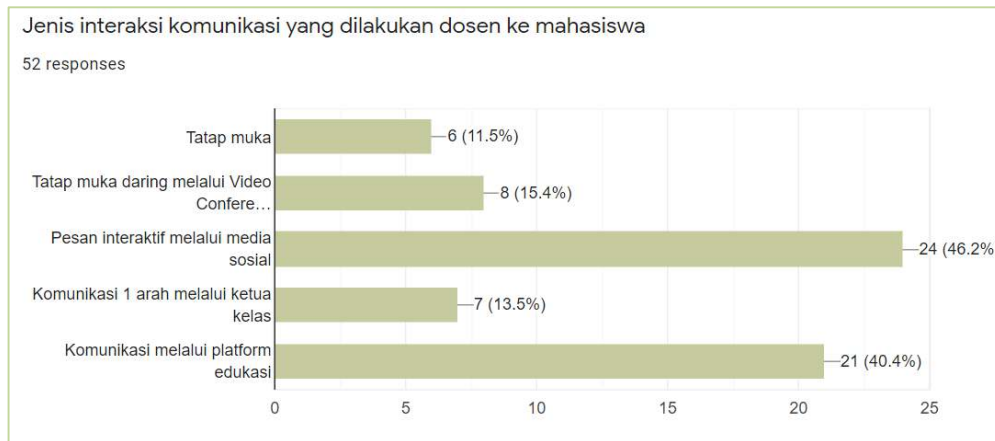

Picture 4. Types of lecturer and Student's Classroom Interaction.

The question is, do students feel that they have the means for independent learning with that kind of teaching method? The result shows that in average all respondents stated that there were facilities for independent learning by teaching method of constantly giving assignments by lecturers.

Picture 5. Students' Independent Learning Level.

However, from the suggestion column that respondents must fill in for online English Language lectures, many of them want their lecturers to be more interactive either through social media, educational platforms or video conferences for online lectures.
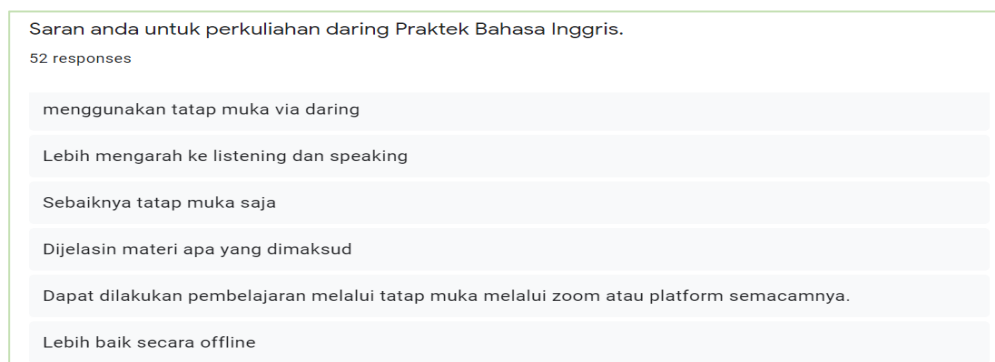
Picture 6. Respondents Suggestion on Online English Practice Course.

3.2 Syllabus and Learning Materials

On this topic, only 3 questions were asked to the respondents. For college students, interesting learning materials can increase their enthusiasm in learning. According to Sudaryono [14], to find out how much student feel interested in learning can be measured through his/her personal interest. Interest can be measured by the response of someone when responding to something. Students who have an interest in an object will tend to pay greater attention to the material learned.

From the questionnaire results, 44.2% respondents feel that all learning materials in this semester are interesting and the level of difficulty is considered normal (for 63.5% respondents), which all lead to an increasing respondents' interest level in learning English language (53.8%) seriously regardless of the obstacles experienced.


Picture 7. Students' Interest Level in Lecture Materials.

3.3 Learning Assessment Methods

According to Norman in Djaali & Pudji Mulyono [15], a test is one of the comprehensive, systematic, and objective evaluation procedures whose results can be used as a basis for decision making. Midterm and final tests in Akatel are carried out by online methods with lecturers as both executor and examiner. The exam schedule is made like a face-to-face exam schedule exclude the the exam rooms info.

The test method is adjusted to the duration of the exam for each subject but the institution also accommodates the test method with a longer duration, such as take-home test. According to Wulan E.R. and Rusdiana [16, p. 219], to carry out an evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes, a teacher can use two kinds of tests namely standardized tests and teacher-made tests. Although the test material has similarities between several lecturers, but the form of the test is still diverse and cannot be used to evaluate learning outcome in general.

The type of test used by the majority of lecturers is essay (80.8%) and fill-in-the-blanks (38.5%). According to Sukardi in Wulan E.R. and Rusdiana [16], an ontology of an essay test is a form of written test whose composition consists of question items, each containing problems and demanding student answers through word descriptions that reflect students' thinking abilities. With essays, lecturers can find out how far students' abilities have improved during the semester. This is supported by the response of 73.1% of students who stated that the form of the questions in the test reflects their knowledge and English language skills.
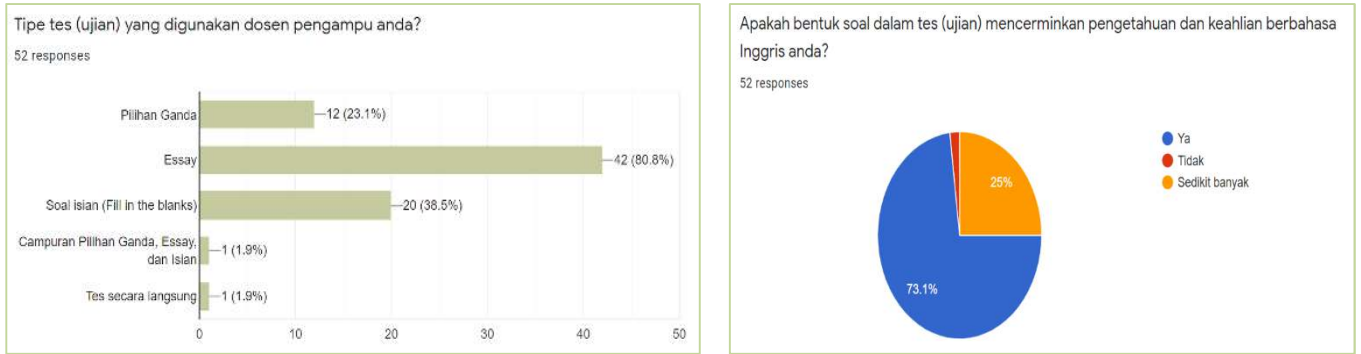
Picture 8 and 9. Test Types and Their Usage in Students Learning Progress.

According to Wulan E.R. and Rusdiana [16], the item's difficulty level function is usually associated with test objectives. For the purposes of semester exams, items normally have moderate difficulty level. The results showed that respondents acknowledge that there was a compatibility between the material provided during the lectures and the material that appeared in the test. The level of difficulty of the test was considered moderate for the majority of respondents (59.6%). Moreover, the majority of respondents (96.2%) also rated the duration of the test given in each exam according to the BAA rules which were adjusted to the amount of the SKS (Semester Credit Unit).
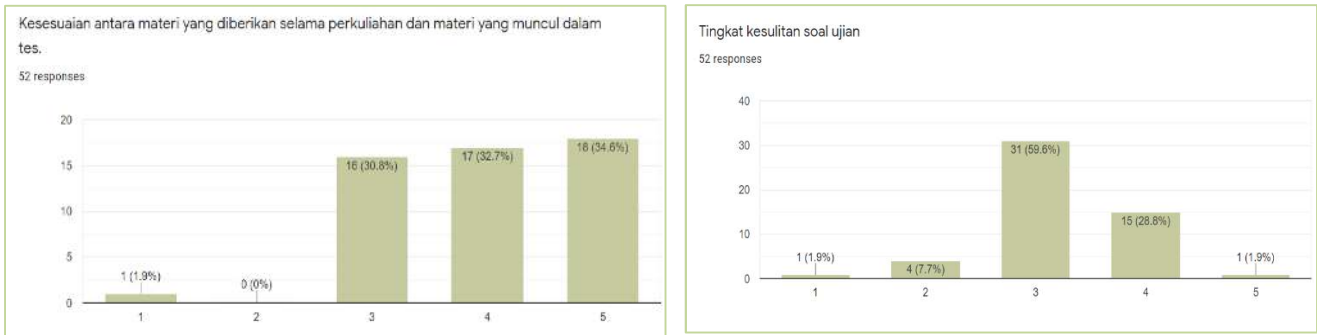

Picture 10 and 11. Compatibility in Materials Given in Class and in Tests in relation of Test Difficulty Level.

3.4 Affective Aspects of Respondents

According to Bloom and Krathwohl in Wulan E.R. and Rusdiana [16], learning on the affective aspect emphasizes more on the atmosphere of feelings, emotions or levels of acceptance or rejection. Several types of instruments used to measure learning outcomes for affective aspects include: participation charts, checklists, rating scales, and attitude scales. Even so, the measurement of respondents' affective aspects in this study was done by asking self-reflection questions to the respondents.

In the question of "I feel this course is beneficial for me", 44.2% of respondents admit that the English Practice course has benefits in their learning process. Even so 51.9% of respondents felt that the activities they experienced and course materials that they learnt had not developed their English language skills to the maximum extent. This could be caused by the method of giving independent assignments that rely too much on the development of only one or two skills, which are reading comprehension and writing skills.
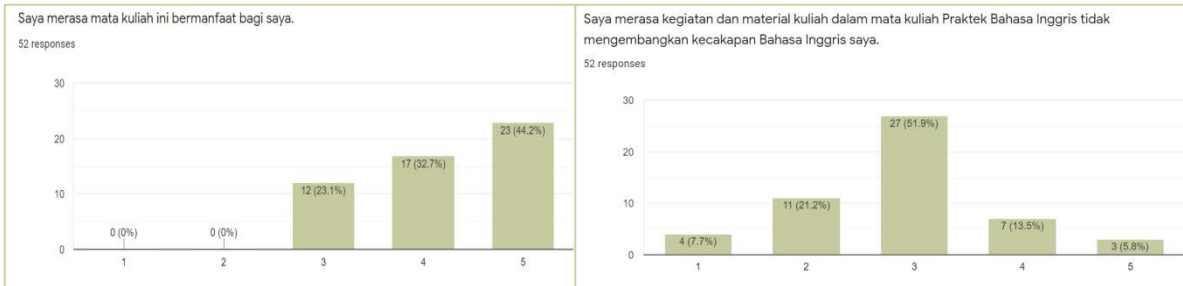
Picture 12 and 13. Course Benefits for Students.

Although many argue that online learning is very easy to do, 46.2% of respondents prefer to undergo face-to-face lectures. This is supported by data that shows 50% of respondents do not feel more actively participating in lectures if held online.
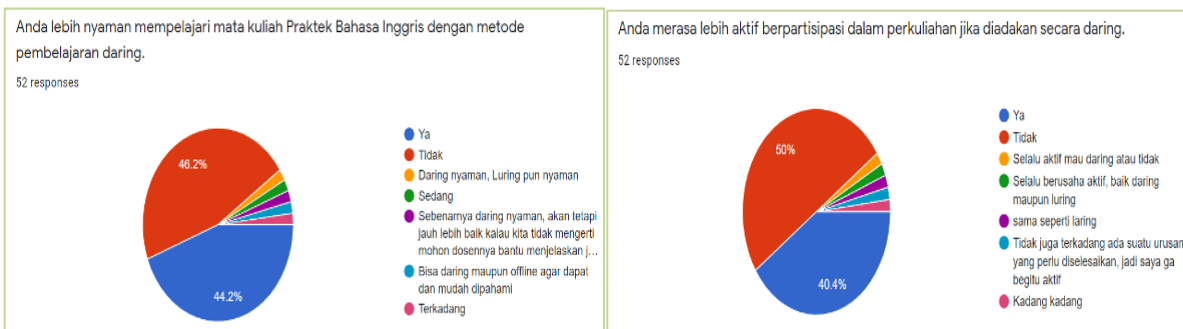
Picture 14 and 15. Levels of Convenience and Participation of Students in Online Courses.

There are many reasons why students become less active in online lectures. The majority of problems experienced by them are unstable internet network constraints, limited internet quota, less attractive/diverse lecturing methods and technical problems with the educational platform that the lecturer chooses.
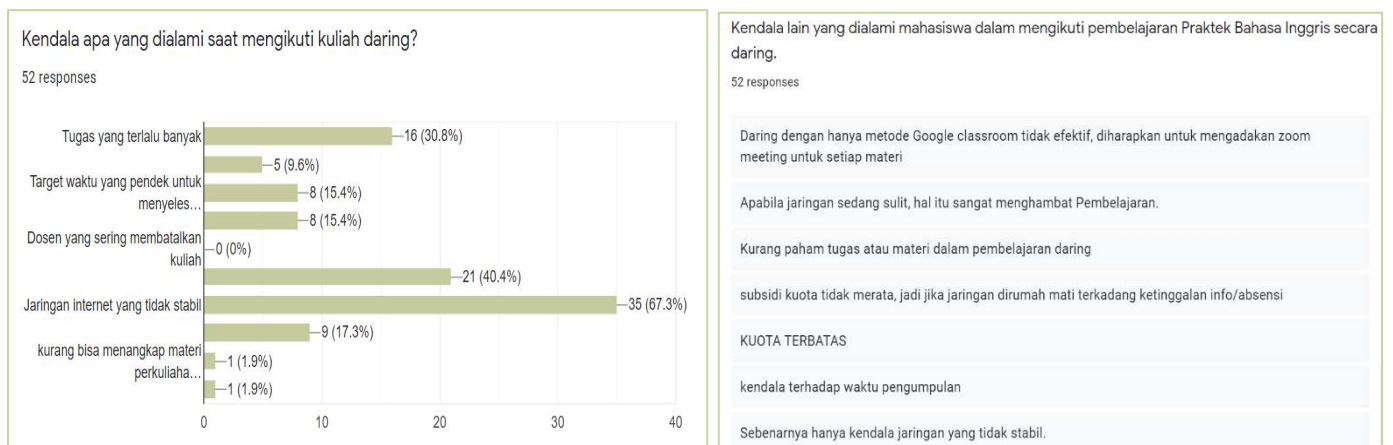
Picture 16 and 17. Student Constraints in Online Participations.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results showed that the majority of students participated in the lectures well even though there were some obstacles in learning. Online English Practice lectures conducted without proper preparation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic at Telkom Academy Jakarta are considered to be going well enough despite the

variety of educational platforms that lecturers used. There is obviously some room for improvement, especially of the four things that became the subject of this study.

First, online learning can still use curriculum and RPS concepts that are designed for face-to-face learning, but learning outcomes will be maximized if there are variations in learning methods. In this case, lecturers can design several variations of teaching activities that attract the attention of students to attend online lectures. Second, there is no serious problem in the method of test chosen by the lecturer, but the aspect of limiting the duration of time causes obstacles in uploading their work when the quality of the internet network is poor. The selection of questions such as multiple choices (PG), entries or matchmaking which can be done on the education platform will make it easier for students to work on it and lecturers to correct student work. Third, all respondents realized the importance of this lecture in their learning process. This is very important for the progress of individual learning. A crucial problem faced by some respondents is their inability to maximize online lectures and prefers to do face-to-face lectures.

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