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POST COVID-19 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: AN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA EXPERIENCE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The COVID-19 pandemic has been decreasing since vaccination is widely injected across areas, particularly in Yogyakarta. The teaching-learning process shifted from online to offline; some are blended/hybrid learning modes. The objective of this research is to describe English language teaching, which is conducted offline (face-to-face) learning in two countries, Indonesia and Malaysia. The researchers employed a qualitative design, particularly a case study, to portray English language teaching and learning as well as its challenges. The result reveals that teaching and learning activities in the Indonesian contexts are in three phases, pre, while, and post, with a scientific approach in the while phase and the Moodle platform as a medium to help teachers and students with learning activities. In the context of Malaysia, teaching activities employ various tools such as Google Classrooms, Google Meet, Facebook Live, Zoom, Telegram, and WhatsApp. These tools are either synchronous learning or asynchronous learning. Various challenges are also revealed in this teaching and learning, such as online media platforms

and applications, time constraints, and a lack of pedagogical competence in designing activities promoting independent and autonomous learning activities.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant change to the education system. The first online course was offered by the University of Toronto in 1984, and the University of Phoenix was the first educational institution to offer a full online bachelor's and master's degree (Soumik Sarkar, 2020). Apart from the universities in the United States of America, several other universities from Britain and India were among the first to offer online education. Online learning allows people to learn for personal accomplishment or to learn a professional degree without physically attending a class. Notably, the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak has significantly contributed to the rise of online learning. It was not an option for learning. Instead, it was a need as the entire world was under lockdown. Digital devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones are intended to support teaching and learning. Interestingly, online learning was the country's only option to assist schools and universities in facilitating student learning during the lockdown. This learning method has been conducted in several schools to facilitate teaching and learning activities between the teacher and student (Selvanathan et al, 2020). Furthermore, the shift increases the students' learning motivation, learning engagement, students' performance, students' critical thinking, as well as the teachers' creativity (Firman et al., 2021). Therefore, this study intends to highlight the ways of teaching and learning English in schools in two countries, Indonesia and Malaysia, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teaching English in Indonesia

The pedagogy of English language instruction has experienced significant evolution. Earlier pedagogical models prioritized grammatical fluency, relying heavily on rote learning and systematic instruction. This gave way to an era where the importance of grammar was re-evaluated, recognizing that effective communication required skills beyond grammatical accuracy, including the use of language in social contexts. Modern language education, particularly since the late 1990s, emphasizes communicative competence, placing learners at the heart of the educational experience, promoting genuine interaction, task-based learning, and a diversified curriculum.

The education system in Indonesia is mainly organized by the Ministry of National Education and Culture, decreed by law Number 20 in 2003 about the National Education System. This law establishes the framework and guidelines for the country's education sector and emphasizes the significance of education in developing capabilities and forming a dignified national character. Furthermore, it serves as the basis for establishing and operating educational institutions, standards for education, and managing educational resources. In addition, the law aims to provide every citizen with the opportunity to achieve their potential through education, promoting principles such as equity, quality, and continuous improvement. It also stresses the role of the national government in ensuring access to education for all citizens, regardless of their background. The law also sets the standards for Indonesian education.

The Indonesian education system has seen progressive curriculum reforms initiated by the Ministry of Education. Starting from the early 2000s, a shift from a competency-based framework led to the adoption of the 2006 curriculum, followed by the 2013 curriculum, and more recently, the 'Kurikulum Merdeka' (Kurniati et al., 2022). Schools in Indonesia have the flexibility to adopt the scientific-method-driven 2013 curriculum, the more recent 'Kurikulum Merdeka,' or a combination of both. In the context of English language instruction, a methodology influenced by the scientific process has been introduced, although "scientific" traditionally aligns with disciplines like natural and social sciences (Ratnaningsih, 2017). This approach unfolds in five phases, beginning with an examination of various learning materials. It progresses to the development of questions and hypotheses related to the subject at hand. This is followed by gathering information through diverse methods, leading to the organization of ideas and formulation of conclusions. Finally, students disseminate their findings either in spoken or in written form.

In Indonesia, the post-COVID-19 pandemic schools conducted offline (face-to-face) learning through several schools run blended or hybrid learning attached to their e-learning system in various names, including Learning Management Systems (LMS), Learning Support Systems (LSS) and Learning Design Systems (LDS) (Sharifov & Mustafa, 2021). The LMS points to an educational online system that facilitates students, teachers, and administrators (Aldiab et al., 2019). Due to the efficient function of LMS in the online learning process, numerous educational institutions use LMS platforms as educational tools (Abou El-Seoud et al., 2014). Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Moodle) is one of the LMS that is widely used due to its open-source facility (Vladoiu & Constantinescu, 2020). Moodle offers various interactive learning courses and promotes the students' learning center (Peerapolchaikul, Suealek, & Rojpibulstit, 2019). In addition, Moodle allows teachers to create learning spaces called "courses." Notably, each course has its own set of resources and activities, called "modules," which can be customized in terms of organization and appearance. Teachers can password-protect courses so that only enrolled students or students can upload assignments for teachers to mark. Moreover, teachers get an automatic alert when a new assignment arrives, and all marks can be stored in Moodle. Other than that, teachers and students can communicate without any geographical boundaries since Moodle provides a discussion space. In addition, the resources, assignments, and learning design items on Moodle allow the students to explore their needs in accomplishing the learning target.

Teaching English in Malaysia

The global pandemic that struck in 2020 has surely made an impact on all aspects of our lives. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has released a statement that mentions the flexibility teachers can utilize in the Ministry's official platform, i.e., Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia (DELIMa). This is a one-stop platform for both teachers and students who have educational needs. This platform connects to other links such as Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams. The platform would also have access to digital textbooks, teaching, and learning videos, mainly from EduwebTV or CikgooTube, as well as a more interactive learning platform such as Edpuzzle, Quizizz, and Kahoot.

Similarly, the Ministry of Higher Education has released a statement allowing university lecturers to comply with the lockdown enforcement and continue their roles using any available platforms. Hence, many universities fully adopted their LMS, such as ufuture for Universiti Teknologi MARA, the

open and distance learning system for Universiti Malaya and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, and the elearning portal for Universiti Sains Malaysia, to name a few.

Both the teachers and students were forced to adapt to using various online platforms while acknowledging that the number of COVID-19 cases was on the rise. With a lack of experience and sudden shift to teaching, the teachers felt pressured (Kai Yan Wong et al., 2021; Jasmine Farzana Ali Almurtadha and Hiew Soon Hin, 2022; Che Wan Aisyah Azizah Che Wan Ahmad et al., 2022; Mohd Attamimi Farouk Maarof et al., 2022). Hence, the Malaysian government has taken the initiative to promote online teaching and learning through multiple mediums and approaches during these trying times. With a national lockdown that had to be imposed, many changes and adaptations to the new normal had to be made. Everyone was unprepared for this sudden change, and teachers had to adapt to a new teaching style, the so-called from teaching in a physical classroom to online teaching (Bailey & Lee, 2020). At the same time, a major concern was determining which online learning platform and other digital resources effectively ensured that learning took place. In addition, accessibility to gadgets and internet connection are other issues to be considered. Despite that, the teachers immediately learned how to utilize technology in an online classroom (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). Moreover, the teachers were allowed to use any online learning platform that would best facilitate their teaching and learning.

In Malaysia, there were several phases to the lockdown. The government issued the first Movement Control Order (MCO) on 18 March 2020, comprising four phases. During these first four phases, only essential businesses are allowed to operate. A Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) was then issued to certain critical districts. The Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) was then issued in the second half of the year as the country moves toward recovery. Figure 1.1 below summarizes the phases of the national lockdown:

Phase	Name	Duration
Phase 1	MCO	18 – 31 March 2020
Phase 2	MCO	1 – 14 April 2020
Phase 3	MCO	15 – 28 April 2020
Phase 4	MCO	29 April – 12 May 2020
Phase 5	CMCO	13 May – 9 June 2020
Phase 6	RMCO	10 June – 31 December 2020

Figure 1. Phases of the COVID-19 lockdown in Malaysia

Despite all the changes, the major concern of the lockdown was for those sitting for the public examination, specifically Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education, Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) or Malaysian Higher School Certificate, Sijil Vokasional Malaysia (SVM) or Malaysian Vocational Certificate and Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM) or Malaysian Higher Religious Certificate.

Schools were only reopened on 20 January 2021 and were only for students sitting for SPM, a compulsory national examination. Other academic institutions only reopened in March 2021 and were completely opened by the end of the year. Priority was given to SPM candidates who required more attention and assistance with the sudden change in teaching and learning. Nevertheless, other school students return to face-to-face schooling once the situation is under control, allowing them to learn in real life with friends and teachers.

2.   Methodology

The current case study aims to explore a portrait of English language teaching in two countries post-COVID-19 pandemic. A case study is to understand real-life phenomena in detail (Yin, 2002). The present study was conducted in a private vocational school in Magelang, central Java, Indonesia. The data collection was used to identify the English language teaching and problems experienced by teachers. The case study in Malaysia was from a primary school. It is based on an observation of the teaching style conducted during the pandemic.

3.   Discussion

Indonesia

As the 'Kurikulum Merdeka' is new and many teachers are still struggling to understand how to implement it in classrooms, the 2013 curriculum is still used widely. The school observed in the present study also applied the 2013 curriculum. The teacher said, "...*kurikulum yang diajarkan adalah kurikulum K-13. Pengembangan silabus, penyusunan RPP dan materi dilakukan bersama guru bahasa inggris yang lain disekolah*" ("… the curriculum used in vocational school was the K-13 curriculum. Together with other English teachers from other schools, the teacher develop the sylabus, lesson plan and handout. "). In the context of educational preparation, teachers engage in a collective effort to harmonize their understanding and practices concerning various pedagogical elements such as methods, media, and assessments. This cooperative approach enriches professional growth among educators (Voogt, Pieters, Handelzalts, 2016). Thus, by jointly preparing for teaching, educators can deliberate on and dissect various situations, exchange invaluable experiences, and gain a holistic understanding of their teaching context. Furthermore, such a forum is pivotal for fostering innovative approaches to both teaching and learning (Drake, Land, Tyminski, 2014).

"*Sejak pandemi COVID-19, sekolah menggunakan moodle (platform) untuk membantu guru dan siswa dalam kegiatan belajar mengajar. Setiap guru sudah ada akun berserta dengan kelas masing-masing. Setiap siswa akan log in pada akun mereka masing-masing untuk mengakses pelajaran yang diberikan oleh setiap guru.*" (Since COVID-19, teacher and students used Moodle platform. Each teacher had a Moodle account for managing the class. Besides, the students also had accounts for accessing items on Moodle based on the class they enrolled).

In a recent study, Moodle proved beneficial for educators and learners alike, providing a platform for both parties to access and utilize its resources. Educators, therefore, must be adept with Moodle's features, swiftly prepare lesson plans, and curate engaging content. In the Indonesian educational realm, where English serves as a foreign language that is not commonly used in daily interactions, educators often blend English with Bahasa to enhance students' comprehension of instructions and subject matter.
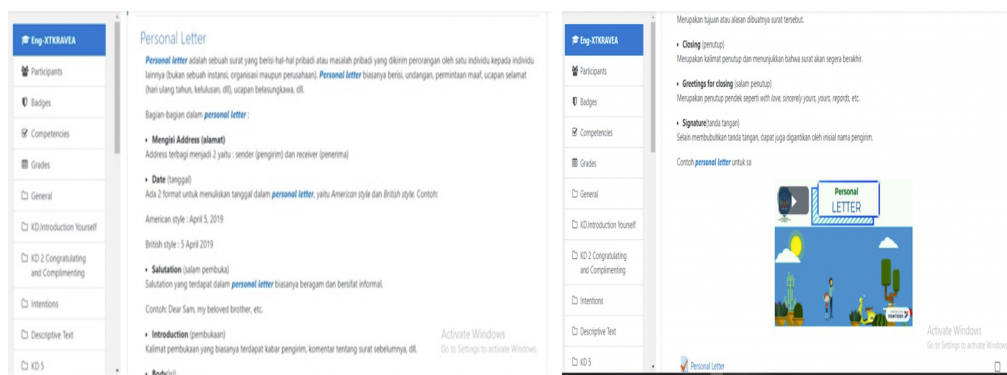
Figure 2. Teaching material example

In the visual example from Moodle, the lesson on "Personal Letter" incorporates a mix of English and Bahasa. While language features of the letter are introduced in English, explanations are provided in Bahasa. Research indicates that bilingual teaching methods do not always enhance language proficiency (Margana, 2015; Bretuo, 2021; Abduh, 2018). Nevertheless, a dual-language approach can aid comprehension if the instructor is proficient in both languages (Cook, 2013). Teachers play a crucial role in fostering students' proficiency in English. Thus, it is essential for educators to motivate students to participate actively, creating an environment that is both conducive to learning and promotes communication (Yulia & Budiharti, 2019).

In the context of the 2013 curriculum's scientific method, the current study incorporated its five stages into the learning process. Initially, students engaged with the educational content distributed by their teacher through the Moodle platform. The teacher mentioned, "....*kami biasanya memberikan materi berupa power point atau handout yang sudah kami buat kemudian kami upload pada platform moodle sesuai dengan kelas masing-masing*" ("…we commonly shared the materials in power point or handouts on Moodle based on the classes"). By sharing the learning materials on Moodle, the students can access the materials easily. Moreover, the students can also expand their comprehension by exploring more knowledge about using the internet. In other words, the students experience in personalizing their own learning (Aljawarneh, 2020).

Figure 2 illustrates instructional content for "Personal Letter" on Moodle, showcasing a dual-language approach with English and Bahasa to aid comprehension. The resources, comprising texts, videos, and images, assist learners in understanding the letter's characteristics, context, vocabulary, and format. The student's engagement begins with exploration and proceeds to inquiry, encouraging them to delve deeper into the subject matter. The teacher said, "...*saya biasanya memberikan kesempatan siswa untuk bertanya dalam forum moodle terkait dengan materi yang saya berikan*." ("…I commonly provide opportunities for the students to ask related to the given materials via Moodle"). This illustrates that even without direct contact, Moodle facilitates dialogue between educators and learners. Hence, Moodle serves as an effective platform for this exchange, promoting interactive learning (Acar & Kayaoglu. 2020). Optimal engagement, however, is rooted in the mutual comfort of the participants in the educational process (Widyastuti et al., 2020).
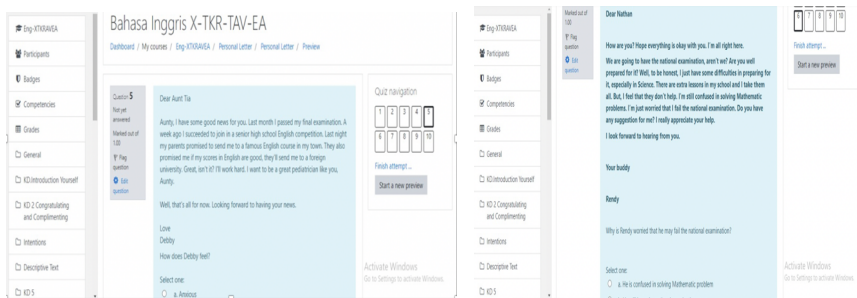
Figure 3. Example of task/activity

After the inquiry phase in the scientific-driven method, learners proceed to gather more detailed information about the subject. With the teacher's guidance through specifically designed activities, students deepen their comprehension by identifying key elements such as text structure, linguistic features, and the social purpose of the texts under scrutiny.

Figure 4. Example of the assessment

Figure 3 depicts the upload of a "Personal Letter" text accompanied by multiple-choice questions on Moodle. These questions, derived from case studies related to the "Personal Letter," are crafted to link the student's existing knowledge to the new material. Utilizing case studies is known to significantly bolster cognitive development by engaging students in the recall, comprehension, and evaluation of content (Bonney, 2015). Moreover, this approach swiftly yields data on learners' cognitive progress, with Moodle efficiently displaying task scores.
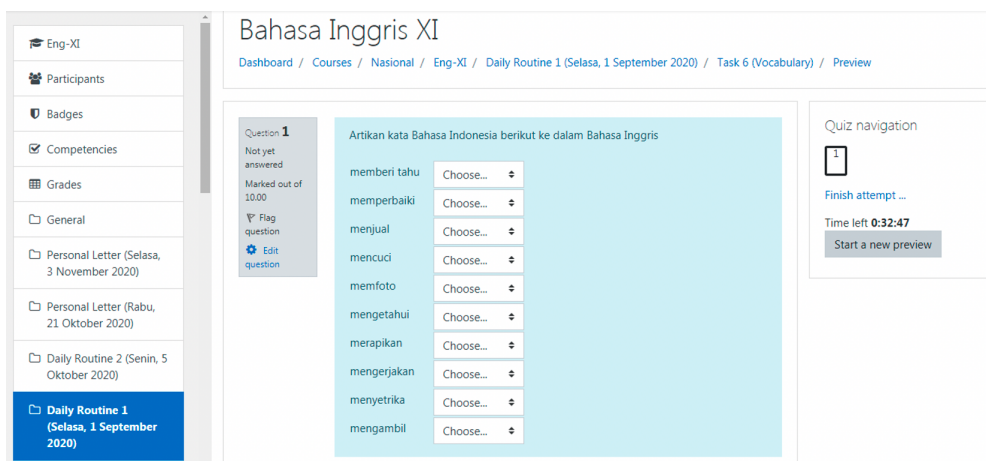
Figure 5. Assignment

Learner performance data serves as a crucial pivot for educators to advance to the 'associating' phase in the structured scientific teaching methodology. In this stage, the educator evaluates comprehension through interactive reviews, such as Q&A sessions, thereby gauging the student's grasp of the subject matter. Subsequently, the educator assigns tasks summarizing the learning content, ensuring a consolidation of the material covered.

Figure 5 illustrates a culminating task focusing on vocabulary development within a "Personal Letter" module. Despite its traditional roots, the grammar-translation method demonstrated is still relevant due to the learners' linguistic preferences for Bahasa Indonesia. Its continued use is considered beneficial, especially when integrated with technology, which serves to enhance engagement in the educational process. Additionally, this blend of classic teaching methodology with modern tools has been recognized as effective for fostering active participation between students and teachers (Altun, 2015).

The last step of the learning procedure is communicating. This phase of the learning sequence entails expression. Focusing on "Personal Letters," students manifest their understanding and task analysis into actual letter writing. This tangible output permits educators to evaluate the learners' proficiency in written English. While the scientific method's structured steps were meticulously implemented, educators encountered several pedagogical hurdles, including technological apprehension, preparatory challenges, and maintaining effective classroom dynamics and peer engagement (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Teachers also highlighted that the primary emphasis of their literacy instruction is on vocabulary acquisition. When queried about the obstacles faced during the pandemic, the language teachers indicated that students struggled to grasp vocabulary and its meanings in the virtual classroom setting. Thus, educators seek innovative approaches and strategies to better support students in enhancing their vocabulary skills (Yulia et al., 2023).

Throughout the educational process, teachers encountered challenges related to developing instructional materials, constructing the syllabus and educational resources, and evaluating student performance.

"My own difficulty was that having lack ability in using technology; I am not really capable of using the device, online platforms, and the teaching application."

"I am confused about using the application for teaching and learning and creating an attractive lesson video that can take students' interest in my material."

The data obtained from the conversation with the English teachers indicate that teachers struggled with technology. Nevertheless, transitioning from traditional classroom instruction to digital platforms necessitated them to adapt their teaching methods for online delivery. This issue is quite common among educators and learners navigating new educational settings (Kirkwood & Price, 2014).

Certainly, the shift to a different educational setting had a considerable effect on how teaching and learning materials were prepared. In traditional classrooms, the teachers primarily relied on textbooks and worksheets to support instruction, which did not necessitate the creation of PowerPoint presentations, videos, or other digital resources. However, in the online setting, the teachers were required to prepare all materials in a digital format, allowing students to access them easily from any location at any time. Additionally, a significant challenge in preparing for teaching and learning was the time constraint.

"The stages of the learning process were different from conventional face-to-face classes; we, as English teachers in technical high school, have to cut some standard competence because of the limit of the time."

Typically, according to the 2013 curriculum, a single learning unit is 45 minutes long, but for online classes, this was reduced to 30 minutes. This significant reduction in time required English teachers to revise their syllabi and instructional materials accordingly. They needed to select materials that fit the shortened time frame, often opting to use pre-existing videos or PowerPoint presentations found online. Despite these adjustments to the teaching materials, there were still concerns regarding the actual English proficiency levels achieved by students.

"I cannot find out which of my students understand and do not understand the material given."

"When I give them an assignment, I ought to check their assignment submission one by one. I need to list their names and give a comment to those whose assignment has not been submitted yet."

With assignments and tasks submitted in written form, the teacher faced challenges in determining their authenticity. It was challenging to ascertain if students completed the work independently or if they received help from others. Online, there is a tendency for students to multitask, like browsing other websites or messaging peers for answers, complicating the teacher's ability to ensure that submissions are the result of individual effort (Han & Shin, 2016).

Malaysia

The Ministry of Education Malaysia has allowed teachers to use various platforms during the pandemic lockdown. Initially, the Ministry introduced the DELIMa learning platform in 2019. Due to the lockdown, students were also made compulsory to join the DELIMa learning platform. Note that DELIMa is based on Google Sites. Therefore, access to DELIMa can be gained via the students'

Google account. All students are provided with a Google account by the school. Figure 6 below displays the login page for DELIMa.
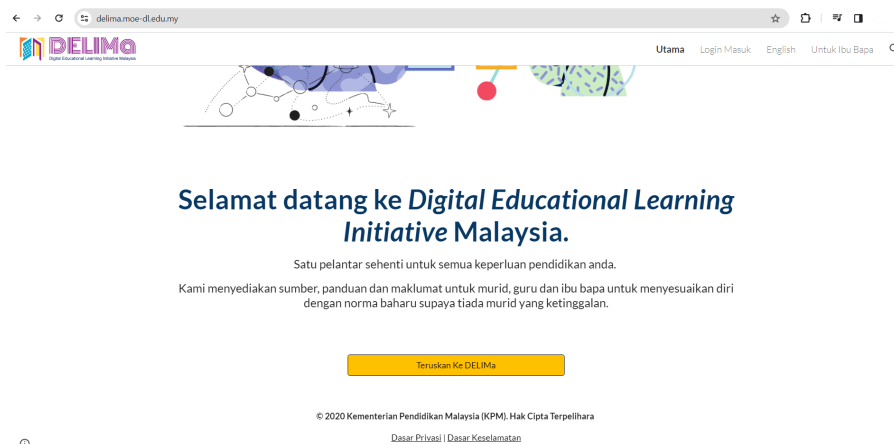
Figure 6. DELIMa Login Page

However, DELIMa was not made compulsory as the main teaching platform. According to Jafar A. et al. (2022), students in rural areas have been discovered to face technical and connection problems, lack of focus in learning, physical health problems, social isolation, and low digital literacy compared to urban areas. Hence, the Ministry recommended that teachers enhance their pedagogical skills through online teaching. Any platforms suitable for teaching and learning are encouraged.

Two of the most common platforms are the WhatsApp or the Telegram application. This selected platform would be the medium of communication where the school can disseminate information pertaining to school updates to the parents or guardians (Ziham Zawawi Mazlan et al., 2022). Figure 7 illustrates the two logos of the main social media application used.
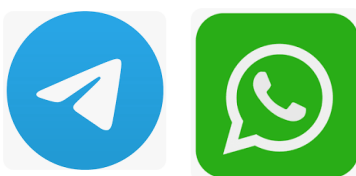
Figure 7. Telegram and WhatsApp application

Considering the internet's receptivity and the availability of gadgets, the WhatsApp and Telegram applications came in handy as well. The Telegram application appeared more reliable as it could store more data in its cloud storage than the WhatsApp application. Meanwhile, Google Classroom is typically selected for a more stable internet connection or perhaps as an option to submit the students' homework.

To illustrate, a teacher may choose to teach on the topic of 'People at Work' from the English textbook of a standard 3 class. In one of the classes, the teacher may conduct a Google Meet session. It is during this Google Meet session that the teacher explains the lessons. After one session of Google Meet, the teacher asks the students to complete the activity in the textbook. Figure 8 below portrays a sample activity from the Year 3 textbook. The students will then take a snapshot of the completed activity and submit it via a chosen platform, WhatsApp or Telegram. Several teachers also prefer Google Classroom, where the class lessons are to be submitted via Google Classroom. The teacher will check the answers from there and return the checked work.
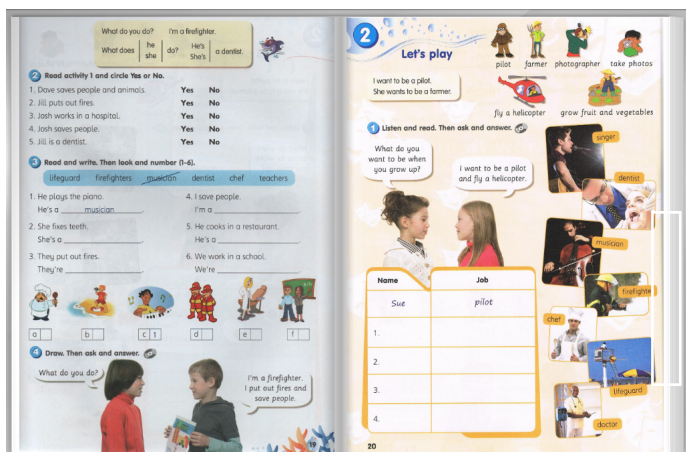
Figure .8. Sample Activity from Standard 3 English textbook

In addition, teachers also do not limit the use of textbooks as they normally would in a classroom setting. For example, teachers can use a more interactive application such as Live Worksheets. In the Live Worksheets, students are to answer questions pertaining to the topic of the lesson. Live Worksheets also allow the students to be graded once they have completed the task. In short, the teacher usually starts a lesson with a Google Meet to explain the topic, followed by completing the activity in the textbook and further reinforced with a Live Worksheet. Figure 9 below displays the Live Worksheets logo.

Figure 9. Live Worksheet

It has also been discovered that interactive lessons are completed at a faster rate as these students are familiar with the learning device used. Siew Min Thang et al. (2022) discovered in their study that from the total of 436 students, 42.9% used smartphones, 31.8% used laptops, and the remaining 15.6% and 9.7% used tablets and desktops, respectively, for online learning during the pandemic. This implies that when the learning device is more familiar to the students and with interactive

activities, it makes learning more fun. This is crucial since the students are at home during the pandemic. According to Siew Min Thang et al. (2022), in their study, it was discovered that the respondents in her study preferred classroom learning as it makes them understand the lesson better. Therefore, some teachers had the students video record some lessons and submit them via Telegram.

The biggest challenge is ensuring that the students are connected. Connected here means the students have a learning device and internet connection (Mahiswaran et al., 2020). One of the measures taken up by the Ministry of Education was to reinforce the DidikTV channel. This channel can be viewed online and offline for free, provided the family has an ASTRO application. The educational program is aired from Mondays to Fridays and is available from 7 a.m. to 12 a.m. The Ministry of Education believes that this measure ensures that all students are not left behind in education. Figure 10 below illustrates the DidikTV channel's official page.

DidikTV KPM

DidikTV KPM merupakan **TV Pendidikan** melalui rangkaian televisyen pendidikan Malaysia yang dimiliki, dihasilkan dan dikendalikan oleh usaha sama antara **Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia** dan **Media Prima Berhad**. Rangkaian ini akan menyiarkan program pendidikan untuk pelbagai mata pelajaran sekolah.

Figure 10. DidikTV's official channel

4.   Conclusion

This study aimed to share an insight into the experiences of two countries in teaching English during the COVID-19 lockdown. It has provided insight into how both countries tried their best to ensure that learning occurs no matter the situation. Consequently, it has been demonstrated that both countries utilized online learning platforms and social media platforms to facilitate teaching and learning. Despite the challenges of not owning a device or not having an internet connection, teachers from both countries tried their best to ensure that teaching and learning take place.

Teachers from both countries work diligently to ensure that teaching and learning occur despite the challenges. It can be observed that the teachers utilized all the readily available applications and teaching strategies to conduct their lessons. The only challenge was to measure the student's level of understanding. The lessons are insufficient to measure the student's level of understanding of the said topic. Since the pandemic came unexpectedly, proper online testing was unavailable during the lockdown. Despite the circumstances, the teachers worked hard to provide the best education for the students.

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