

**LECTURERS AND STUDENTS CHALLENGES AND PERCEPTION OF
ONLINE READING CLASSROOM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
IN BASIC GENERAL COURSE ENGLISH MKU HASANUDDIN
UNIVERSITY**



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ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDY PROGRAM

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ONLINE READING CLASSROOM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
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Written and Submitted by

DYNA FAUSIA AMRAN

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THESIS

LECTURERS AND STUDENTS CHALLENGES AND
PERCEPTION OF ONLINE READING CLASSROOM
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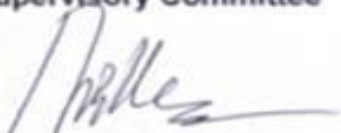
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was the result of my own work.

If it is proven that some part of this thesis is the work of others, I am willing to accept any sanctions for my dishonesty.



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ABSTRACT

DYNA FAUSIA AMRAN. *Online Reading Classroom Management Problems during COVID-19 Pandemic in Basic Course General English MKU Hasanuddin University (supervised by Abidin Pammu and Harlinah Sahib)*

This present study aims to understand the problems encountered by lecturers and students in online reading course during COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the objectives of this study are threefold. The first two objectives are to discover the challenges faced by lecturers in managing online reading classroom and to discover challenges faced by students in online reading classroom. The last objective is to discover lecturers and students' perceptions of online reading classroom.

The objectives of this mixed-method study were attained by administering questionnaires and conducting interviews. The questionnaire is comprised of 40 questions with aim to discover lecturers and students' perception, whereas the interview list is comprised of 10 questions with aim to discover challenges faced by lecturers and students. 7 lecturers and 195 students were taken as the population of the research. The collected data correspond to the first and second objectives were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed, whereas the data of the third objective was only analyzed qualitatively.

The findings showed that four challenges are faced by lecturers in online reading course. These challenges are challenges in preparation, technical issues, students' lack of focus and engagement, and students' limited access to teaching medium. Similarly, students also experience four challenges that are lack of motivation, incapability to interact with peers, incapability to focus, and technical issues. Lastly, both lecturers and students have positive perceptions and attitude towards online reading course.

Keywords: Reading course, online learning, pandemic

ABSTRAK

DYNA FAUSIA AMRAN. Masalah-Masalah Manajemen Kelas Membaca Daring selama Pandemi COVID-19 di Mata Kuliah Bahasa Inggris Umum MKU Universitas Hasanuddin (dibimbing oleh Abidin Pammu dan Harlinah Sahib)

Studi ini bertujuan untuk memahami permasalahan-permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh dosen dan mahasiswa pada kelas reading daring selama pandemic COVID-19. Oleh karena itu, studi ini memiliki tiga tujuan. Dua tujuan pertama adalah untuk menemukan tantangan-tantangan yang dihadapi oleh dosen dalam mengatur kelas reading daring dan untuk menemukan tantangan-tantangan yang dihadapi oleh mahasiswa pada kelas reading daring. Tujuan terakhir adalah untuk menemukan persepsi dosen dan mahasiswa terhadap kelas reading daring.

Tujuan-tujuan dari studi bermetode campuran ini diperoleh dengan menyebarkan kuisisioner dan melakukan wawancara. Kuisisioner terdiri dari 40 pertanyaan dengan tujuan menemukan persepsi dosen dan mahasiswa, sedangkan daftar pertanyaan wawancara terdiri dari 10 pertanyaan dengan tujuan menemukan tantangan-tantangan yang dihadapi oleh dosen dan mahasiswa. 7 dosen dan 195 mahasiswa diambil sebagai populasi penelitian ini. Data yang diperoleh yang berkesesuaian dengan tujuan pertama dan kedua dianalisis secara kuantitatif dan kualitatif, sedangkan data untuk tujuan ketiga dianalisis secara kualitatif saja.

Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa empat tantangan dihadapi oleh dosen dalam kelas reading daring. Tantangan-tantangan tersebut adalah tantangan dalam persiapan, masalah-masalah teknis, kurangnya focus dan partisipasi mahasiswa, dan keterbatasan akses mahasiswa terhadap media pengajaran. Demikian pula, mahasiswa mengalami empat tantangan yaitu kurangnya motivasi, ketidakmampuan berinteraksi dengan rekan mahasiswa, ketidakmampuan untuk focus, dan masalah-masalah teknis. Terakhir, baik dosen dan mahasiswa memiliki persepsi dan sikap yang positif terhadap kelas membaca daring.

Kata kunci: kelas reading, pembelajaran daring, pandemic

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Since its wake in late 2019, Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 has ravaged the entire world. The contagious disease has spread to multiple countries without control. To stop the transmission of the disease, countries across the globe have imposed strict public health measures. People then are forced to abandon their usual pre-pandemic life and adapt to what is called as new normal.

Several public health measures have been taken and strictly followed by countries across the globe to stop the transmission of the disease. The implementation of social distancing regulation has led people to avoid gathering in large groups, maintain one-meter physical distance from one another, and avoid gathering in confined and poorly ventilated rooms. People are also regulated to wear protective gears including face mask, gloves, and face shield to avoid spreading or being contaminated by the virus. These public health measures have led several countries to impose series of lockdowns, curfews, and travel bans to limit people movement.

The implementation of lockdown and similar public health measures have limited people to perform their works from home. With the exception for essential workers, people are discouraged from going outside their home. The implementation of these measures, in several countries, has been quite successful in terms of limiting and stopping the transmission of the disease. However, whilst these measures show the desired result, lives of the people have changed significantly.

Almost all aspect of human life is being affected by the implementation of these public health measures. Unprepared change into a new way of life has led countries to experience breakdowns. Several countries are experiencing economic troubles such as inflation and increase of unemployment rate due to reduction of workforce by companies. The limitation of people movement has also impacted tourism which further damaged the economy of several countries, including Indonesia. In addition, public anger has appeared in several countries due to the incompetence of the government in handling the pandemic.

Dubbed as the new normal, people and institutions entered the new way of life without prior preparation and understanding. Among the most impacted is the education institutions. Schools and universities are forced leave their traditional and conventional face-to-face interaction in classrooms since the conventional learning environment broke the rules of gathering in large numbers, physical distancing, and room ventilation. However, the advancement and transformation of technological innovation has brought educational institutions from instead of abandoning and ceasing learning activities to switch to learning with distanced interaction.

The Internet is essential in maintaining learning activities. Schools and universities are now continuing their activities using video conference (Zoom or Google Classroom), text messaging and social media platforms (Facebook groups, WhatsApp chat groups) or conventional emails, and distinct and more private platforms developed by the institutions. In addition, the popularity of mobile communication devices such as laptops, tablets, or smartphones has made learning virtually more accessible. Thus, with the end of pandemic remains unknown and the return to the conventional learning is hardly possible, teaching-learning activities with indirect interaction is the best solution.

Considering the ongoing pandemic situation in Indonesia, Ministry of Education and Culture has required schools and universities to hold teaching-learning activities from home. Especially for universities, activities that cannot be fulfilled or done online can be scheduled at the end of the semester. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also provided social assistance in the form of phone credit and internet data packages to support students with online learning. Similar subsidies are also granted by universities to their students. In line with the Ministry, starting from academic year 2020/2021 Universitas Hasanuddin has declared all academic activities to be proceed online.

However, the practice of online learning has its own difficulties. The availability of infrastructures and stable internet connection have always become the main issues for online learning in developing and geographically diverse countries. In addition to those general problems, several courses are also experiencing distinct difficulties when they are taught online. The emerging problems are not limited to course materials and practices, but also to how the classroom is managed. Among the courses is reading classroom.

Reading has always become a difficult course to teach. In reading courses, teachers are usually met a situation where students are less motivated to fully participate in reading activities. Students are often reluctant to volunteer in reading short passages and answering questions based on texts they have just read. In addition, it is common to find students not focused to passages their peers assigned to read. Those problems are common in conventional learning interaction and it is often difficult for teachers to foster student's engagement.

With the transition to online learning, not only the learning become less effective, but problems that are commonly found in face-to-face learning are also emerged and often become more difficult to handle. Remote learning process makes it difficult for teachers to manage their classrooms. Students' lack of motivation to participate in online learning can probably rooted from the location where they learn. Being at home, students can be easily distracted to do other things which sometimes prompted students to turning off their videos during live learning session.

On the teachers' part, they are often unfamiliar with the technologies used in online learning and have either inadequate or lack prior knowledge on how to teach online. There are many issues that teachers need to solve before starting their learning classroom. These issues including how would teachers plan and design their online course, how would teachers prepare students for online learning and engage with them, and how would teachers assess students. Therefore, the present research aims to discover how the online classrooms are managed, particularly reading classroom in MKU Universitas Hasanuddin.

1.2 Research Questions

From the research background, some research questions emerged and will be answered in this research. Those research questions are:

1. What are the challenges faced by lecturers in managing online reading classroom?
2. What are the challenges faced by students in online reading classroom?
3. What are the lecturers and students' perceptions of online reading classroom?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions specified above, this research is formulated to fulfill three objectives, as follows:

1. Discover the challenges faced by lecturers in managing online reading classroom.
2. Discover the challenges faced by students in online reading classroom.
3. Reveal the lecturers and students' perception of online reading learning.

1.4 Research Significance

The findings of this research are expected to bore significances that could lead to improvements in how teachers evaluating their online classroom management. This evaluation is in form of the improvement of classroom management that is appropriate and suitable for the conditions of both lecturers and students.

Similarly, this research would be beneficial for future researchers as a resource and reference in their attempt to conduct similar researches. Those researches including the topics of classroom management, especially online reading classroom.

1.5 Research Scope

This research aims to observe the challenges and opportunities of online classroom among MKU lecturers and students of Hasanuddin University. There will be no special treatment given to participants during the research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Related Studies

During the COVID-19 pandemic, immediate and unprepared change from conventional way of learning to online learning has brought the interest of many researchers. Some of the researches are explained below.

Nugroho et al., (2020) observed teaching procedures for translation course and determine students' perceptions of the learning procedures in the course. Using a qualitative paradigm, the researchers employed field observations and questionnaires to answer the research objectives. They observed that the lecturer used Google Classroom for managing theoretical assignments, Google Meet for material discussion, and OmegaT for translation practice. They found 80% of respondents are not satisfied with the online lecture however, 90% of respondents show positive perceptions on the use of Google Classroom and OmegaT.

Blizak et al., (2020) in their exploratory study investigated the perceptions of Algerian university students regarding the abrupt transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. They conducted an online survey with close and open-ended questions to 380 students of Faculty of Chemistry and Hydrocarbons, University of Boumerdes. They found that students have negative perceptions on online learning. They also opined that students' reluctance is rooted in the disruption of internet, the absence of virtual laboratory, stress, and lack of interactivity.

Aji, Ardin & Arifin (2020) explored the perceptions of teachers and students at Parahikma Institute on blended learning as media learning during the coronavirus pandemic. Nine students and three lecturers participated in a semi-structured interview. Both teachers and students reported positive benefits of blended learning, such as effective learning, autonomous learning, and flexibility. However, the participants also reported disadvantages they encountered including poor internet connection, incomprehensible learning materials and inadequate experience in online learning.

Khan et.al., (2021) conducted a quantitative study on 184 university students with aim to examine students' perceptions and readiness of online-learning system adopted by their university. The objectives were sought by means of online questionnaire from June to August 2020. The findings showed students' positive perception of online learning and thus their acceptance of the adopted learning method as it provides freedom to engage with teachers and peers. In addition, the availability and easy access to study resources lead students to have positive attitude.

The mixed method study by Mishra, Gupta, and Shree (2020) aimed to reveal the different forms of teaching modes employed by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they examined the challenges faced by both teachers and students during online teaching-learning process as well as their perceptions. Seventy-eight faculty members and 260 students were sampled for descriptive survey. Also, 20 teachers and 20 students were selected for semi-structured interviews. As for their first objective, they found that the most used learning platform is the university-provided LMS. Also, despite the challenges such as network connection, both teachers and students have a positive perception of the online learning.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Distance Learning and E-Learning

As the name implies, distance learning is a learning condition where both teacher and students are physically separated. The separation of teacher and students can be the result of both either being dispersed geographically or unable to attend school full-time (Nicholson & Sarker: 2002). Clay (1990) defined distance learning as formal education where teacher and students are in separate locations so that they need an interactive telecommunication system to connect. The problem with distance can be reduced with the use of electronic tools or media that could nullified the physical barrier. The use of electronics in learning introduced us to e-learning or electronic learning.

E-learning, or electronic learning, has been widely and variedly defined by researchers. This variation in definition is mainly rooted from the delivery medium that the author is accustomed and familiar with.

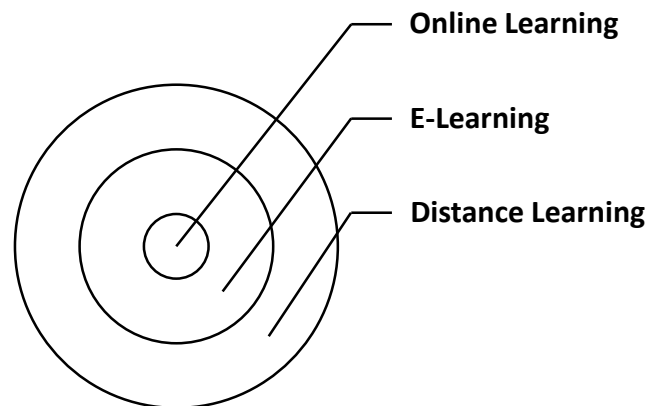
Ong & Lai (2006) and Welsh et al. (2003) defined electronic learning as the use of computer network technology, primarily through Internet, to deliver information or instructions to individuals. Masrom (2007) further specified it as a form of education that is facilitated by the internet and its technologies that encompass the use of the world wide web to support instruction and to deliver course content.

Unlike the previous two, several authors do not restrict or limit electronic learning to the use of Internet. Jenkins & Hanson (2003) viewed electronic learning as learning facilitated and supported through the utilization of information and communication

technologies. Clark & Meyer (2007) defined electronic learning as instruction delivered via a computer that is intended to promote learning.

From these two sets of definitions, it can be concluded that electronic learning is a board alternative to conventional learning that provides the means to augment classroom learning in order to acquire education or to assist the delivery of education, through various technological means i.e., the Internet, multimedia and ICT technologies.

2.2.2 Online Learning



Graphic 1. Relationship between Online Learning, E-Learning, and Distance Learning

From the Graphic 1, online learning is under the umbrella of e-learning and both are under the scope of distance learning. As previously understood, distance learning occurs when teacher and students are separated in two or more places and requires certain tools to make communication possible. If the used tools in education is electronics, i.e, radio, computers, or television, then it is known as e-learning. Further, if the learning process requires or uses the Internet networks it is called online learning.

Online education or learning requires computers and the internet network as medium to deliver learning materials (Kenthor, in Nugroho: 2020). Online learning was not initially used by academic institutions, instead it was pioneered by multinational companies to provide training to their employees across the globe (Rudestam & Schoenholtz-Read: 2002). The practice of online learning in academic institutions was initiated by University of Phoenix by its use of CompuServe. This practice was eventually followed by universities across United States.

2.2.3 Advantages of Online Learning

With the rapid advancement in technology, people can access information from anywhere and anytime and has given them to seek information with great flexibility. With such flexibility, students can study at their own pace and time. In conventional classroom, students are limited to completing their assignments within their course length and commonly within the walls of their classroom. Online learning, on the other hand, offers them with the flexibility of completing their assignments by being wherever and whenever they choose (Eke: 2000).

Moreover, online learning eliminates the barrier of time and cost. By being connected to the internet, students and teacher can have a learning session without any needs of travel. This benefit of online learning can help schools and universities to attract students from any parts of the world. Similarly, students can save their funds for traveling to university. In short, online learning makes knowledge more reachable.

Online learning also promotes autonomous learning for students. In conventional classroom, students are dependent on teachers in terms of obtaining learning materials.

On the other hand, online learning offers students with the responsibility of learning independently. For example, students when they are given assignments can gain resources available in the internet independently to accommodate their tasks. With such control, online learning gives students a boost in their independence and confidence level (Horton, in Eke: 2000). In addition, students can skip the topics they already understand unlike in traditional classroom where lessons are structured and slow paced.

2.2.4 Forms of Online Learning

There are two major online learning models for teacher-led and semester-based remote learning: (1) entirely synchronous learning, and (2) entirely asynchronous learning (Sahin & Shelley: 2020).

1. *Synchronous Learning*

This form of online learning is entirely done in real time with teacher facilitating live discussion and lectures (Mammatah: 2016). This form of online learning requires both teacher and students to join the learning session at a set time, despite both can be situated in different parts of the world. Therefore, synchronous learning requires the use of electronic media that made same-time participations possible. The electronic media available for synchronous learning including:

- a. Audio-video conference; this facility makes it possible for teacher and students to see each other and makes the participants to experience real life classroom activities. Platforms available for audio-video conferencing including Zoom and Google Meet.
- b. Chat and instant messaging session; unlike audio-video conference, the live discussion and information sharing is limited to messages in form of text and graphic formats. In addition, messages are retained by the platform and can be accessed easily. Platforms available for chat and instant messaging including WhatsApp and Telegram.

- c. Application sharing; with this facility, participants could work on documents together at the same time. Platform available for work sharing including Google Docs.

Synchronous learning several advantages including less preparation time for teacher, especially if the teacher is familiar with teaching the students prior to online learning. In addition, synchronous learning gives the feeling of being present in the classroom and further ease the transition from conventional classroom to online classroom.

One of the major drawbacks of synchronous learning is its requirements of same-time participations. Having teacher and students situated in different time zones might resulted on conflicting schedules. Therefore, wise and careful preparations is required. Internet speed and access to internet facilities could also hinder synchronous learning.

2. *Asynchronous Learning*

This form of learning involves self-paced or self-contained learning and offers greater flexibility for students compared to synchronous learning (Mammatah: 2016). This flexibility enables students to study at their own pace and in their own time. Unlike, synchronous learning, referenced materials are readily available for students to access. The electronic media available for asynchronous learning including:

- a. Audio-video streams; this facility comes in form of pre-recorded lectures that are relevant to the course of the study. Unlike live streams, pre-recorded videos are easily downloaded and repeated many times.

- b. Databases; this facility comes in form of repositories of teaching and learning resources which are ready to access. Databases comes in structured and organized manner to allow better content management.

Having advantage in flexibility does not exclude asynchronous learning from posing several drawbacks. This form of learning is not entirely self-paced. Since, learning is led by teacher or instructor, it is typical for them to expect assignments to be completed week by week (Sahin & Shelley: 2020). It is also involving a lot more work as teachers need to prepare materials and teaching content previously. Similarly, students may feel like not attending school (Sahin & Shelley: 2020).

2.2.5 Reading

Reading is commonly known as decoding written symbols (Schneider, Garner, Körkel, & Korkel, 1988), reading can be a transformative experience influencing the thinking and learning of readers. Through reading, new words, concepts, and perspectives can be encountered that challenge and enhance pre-existing knowledge. Therefore, reading is fundamental to teaching and learning, and it is critical to consider the conditions in which the developing child is required to draw out and apply to mean derived from the text (Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, & Snowling, 2013).

Grabe and Stoller (in Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Snow: 2014) explains the reading process which includes three main stages; Pre-Reading, During-Reading, and Post-Reading. The objectives of the pre-reading stage are to establish a purpose of reading, tap prior knowledge, and provide information needed for comprehension. In addition, it

also aims to set up expectations, stimulate interest, build confidence and motivation, explore text organization, and model and practice common pre-reading strategies.

The second stage is the during-reading stage, which objectives are guiding reading to facilitate comprehension, helping students to construct meaning and monitor comprehension, giving students opportunities to connect to what they read and supporting ongoing summarization. Following the previous stage, during this stage students are expected to use model and practice common strategies. Finally, this stage intends to promote discussion that support comprehension and strategy development.

Finally, the third stage aims to check students' comprehension, explore how text organization supports comprehension and provide opportunities for the development of reading fluency. Moreover, this late stage gives students opportunities to summarize, synthesize, evaluate, elaborate, integrate, extend, and apply text information.

To be able to understand a text thoroughly, students need to have and improve reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is "the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes including word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency" (Klingner & Vaughn, n.d.). It refers to the ability to interpret the words, understanding the meaning, and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text.

Reading comprehension, however, is not merely dependent on the readers' characteristics such as previous knowledge or working memory. It also depends on the process of language including basic reading skill, decoding, vocabulary, sensitivity to text

structure, inferencing, and motivation. Further, it also requires effective use of strategic operations, such as metacognition and comprehension memories.

2.2.6 Reading Skills

In reading classroom, especially in MKU Universitas Hasanuddin, several reading skills are required for students to possess. The mastery of these skills is necessary for them to understand complicate and delicate learning materials.

The first skill is skimming which is done by taking only the most important information and the main idea rather than reading all the words (Sutz & Weverka: 2009). Skimming is also done three to four times the speed of normal reading (Liao: 2011). Therefore, during the teaching, students are taught to skip words and learn to select key words or phrases to captivate important information with concentration and practice.

Abdelrahman & Bsharah (2014) provides the procedure of skimming into three steps:

- (i) Reading the first sentence of the paragraph,
- (ii) Reading the last sentence of the paragraph, and
- (iii) Reading the key words between the paragraphs.

The second skill is scanning which is done by looking for specific information without reading the whole text. Unlike scanning, readers are not concerned with the broader meaning of the text, but the detail (Sutz & Weverka: 2009). Essentially, scanning is fast reading (Mikulecky & Jeffries: 2007) that requires moving eyes quickly to seek specific words or phrases (Sutz & Weverka: 2009).

Olson & Ames and Thamrin (in Yusuf et.al, 2017) describe the procedure of scanning into three steps:

- (i) Keeping in mind only the specific information to be found,
- (ii) Making a choice, which clues would support the finding of the required information, and
- (iii) Having a rush view and sweeps down the page quickly to find out the clues. If the clues are found, read the section to acquire the needed information.

The next skill is predicting. This skill is fundamental to reading comprehension. Grellet (in Fisher, 2016) explains prediction as the faculty of predicting or guessing what is to come next, making use of grammatical, lexical, and cultural clues from a section of a text, a chapter, or a textbook. This skill is beneficial especially in preparing readers' mind to absorb, interpret, check, and confirm the information they receive. In predicting, students use information from a text (titles, headings, diagrams, and pictures) to make educated guesses. In addition, students can also rely on previous reading experiences.

Like predicting, previewing is an essential pre-reading skill. When doing previewing, readers aim to find out what they are about to read before starting to read. Grellet (in Fisher, 2016) defines previewing as a very quick reading technique to find out some information about a text. The information can be gathered from the title, table of contents, index, appendix, and preface of a book.

The next essential skill is making inferences. Sometimes the topic of a text is not directly stated, therefore readers are required to look for clues and guess what the text is about. Including the topic, readers are often need to infer the main idea of a text, author'

opinions, and other information (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 1996). In making inferences, students can rely on two sources. First is the clues provided by the text, including the words, sentences, and ideas that make up the text. Second is the clues provided from outside the text, including previous experiences (Fisher, 2016).

According to Mikulecky & Jeffries (1996), summarizing is the process of retelling the important parts of a text in a much shorter form. Summarizing is a strategy in which readers sort through the information presented in a text to pull out and paraphrase the essential ideas. This skill requires readers to decide which part of the text is important, condense the information, and restate them using their own words (Harvey & Goudvis in Fisher, 2016).

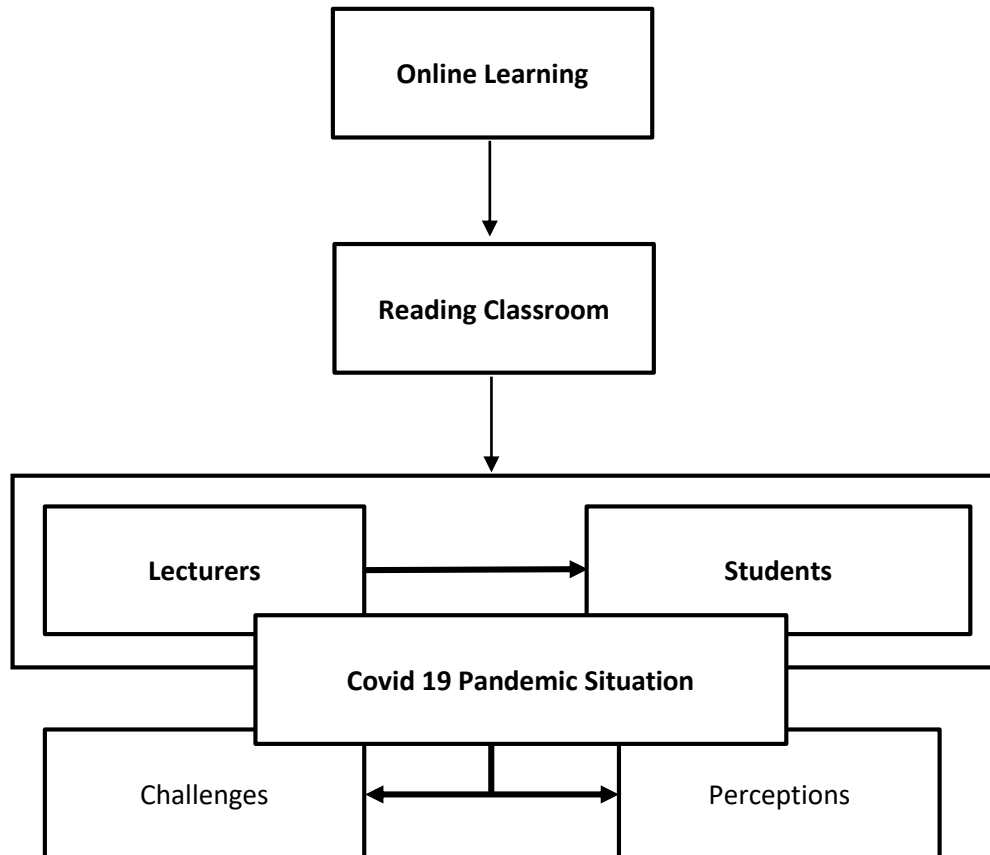
2.2.7 Text Organization

In reading course, students are also taught about topic and main idea. Despite of having similarities, topic and main idea is different. Topic is the general subject or the broad theme of a paragraph or an essay. Topics are simple and described in just a word or a phrase. Main idea however is a complete sentence. It includes the topic and what the author wants to say about that topic. Main idea stated in a paragraph is called a topic sentence.

In developing their ideas, writers often use four basic patterns. Finding the patterns not only will help in finding the main idea also improves reading comprehension. Therefore, it is essential for students to recognize these patterns. The first pattern is listing of related ideas in which the main idea is stated in a form of generalization followed by supporting details. The second pattern is sequencing in which the main idea includes a

series, events, or steps that follow one another. The third is comparison/contrast which the explain similarities and/or differences. Lastly is cause-effect which main idea is one event or action causes another event.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



Reading classroom is modified (influenced) by the integration of online learning. The combination of the two is called online reading classroom, which became the interest of this study. This study attempts to discover the challenges and the perceptions of lecturers and students from online reading classroom.