

Potential of Screencast-O-Matic to Support EFL Teaching and Learning amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

Yustinus Calvin Gai Mali

yustinus.mali@uksw.edu

English Language Education Program

Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana

Salatiga, Indonesia

&

Made Hery Santosa

mhsantosa@undiksha.ac.id

English Language Education Program

Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha

Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia

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Abstract

The COVID-19 situation causes a sudden and unexpected shift of face-to-face pedagogy to emergency remote teaching mode. In that transition, teachers often do not have enough space and time to explore various technology to support their teaching and learning practices that should be done flexibly in various places and times. In response, this article aims to introduce a technology tool called Screencast-O-Matic (SOM), its potential, and possible practices of using SOM that EFL lecturers might adopt for their teaching and learning purposes, specifically in the current pandemic era. Some of the practices discussed in this paper are the use of SOM to record a video lecturer on how to write a paper following an APA format, give screencast-video feedback to students' work, and make a digital video presentation. The discussions of the paper are supported by some of the authors' authentic experiences in using SOM in their classrooms, related research findings, and literature. Ideas for future research are also presented.

Introduction

Education institutions worldwide are currently grappling with challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Moser et al., 2021), starting from the closure of school buildings (Kuchah, 2020; Kuhfeld et al., 2020) to the shift of face-to-face (f2f) pedagogy to emergency remote teaching (ERT) mode (Rahiem, 2020; Trust & Whalen, 2020). This

ERT mode is different from online teaching; it provides temporal access to instructions and instructional supports, which teachers can set up quickly and easily and use during an emergency (see Hodges et al., 2020), such as for language learning purposes (Sumardi & Nugrahani, 2021). ERT also encourages teaching and learning practices to be done flexibly in various places and times during the virus outbreak (Hazaea et al., 2021). In the ERT situation, teachers might need to explore various technology applications to support their students' remote learning, whether they like it or not. However, due to the urgency of the instructional shift in a short time and unexpected way, ERT often provides limited spaces for teachers to explore various technology and pedagogy they might use to support students' learning (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021). In response, the authors would like to introduce a technology tool called Screencast-O-Matic (henceforth called SOM),

potential, and practices of using SOM that EFL teachers, specifically in university settings or higher education contexts, might adopt for their teaching and learning purposes.

What is SOM? It is a friendly-user technology that teachers can use to capture, record a laptop screen, and create a videocast using a webcam and microphone available on a laptop (Fraser & Finn, 2014). With the free version of SOM, teachers can make a 15-minute narrated video lecture with real-time screen capture, and they can save it on their laptop, publish it on YouTube or SOM site, or share it on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Teachers may subscribe to premium plans of SOM to access more recording and editing features of the application, e.g., recording a longer video than 15 minutes, drawing an object while recording, adding music to the video, and editing multiple tracks of audio. Some other details of SOM are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The SOM Application Details

| Details | Descriptions |
|----------------------|---|
| Browser address | https://screencast-o-matic.com/home |
| SOM tutorial sites | 5 best practice for creating quality screencasts https://screencast-o-matic.com/blog/5-best-practices-creating-quality-screencasts/ 5 quick tips for editing videos https://screencast-o-matic.com/blog/5-tips-editing-video/ |
| Product type | Web-based application |
| Language | English |
| Level | Any |
| Media format | MP4, AVI, or FLV video format |
| Operating system | Devices with an active internet connection connected to the Internet and a browser |
| Hardware requirement | A PC or a laptop equipped with a webcam and a microphone |

Note. The details in Table 1 follow Shahrokni's (2018, p. 105) app review guideline.

SOM Practices and Potential

This section presents three SOM practices, namely (1) recording a video about how to write a paper following an APA format, (2) giving screencast-video feedback to students' work, and (3) making a digital video presentation. Following the basic qualitative approach of Ary et al. (2019), the authors present descriptive accounts of each SOM practice (1-3) based on their teaching experiences and digital observations on teachers' SOM videos uploaded on YouTube. The authors also supported the descriptive accounts using relevant research findings and literature, such as how SOM was used in similar contexts. Then, in writing the accounts, the authors followed the question-resolution plot by Holley and Colyar (2009), beginning with teaching and learning related problems in a classroom, followed by factual

Writing a Paper Following an APA Format

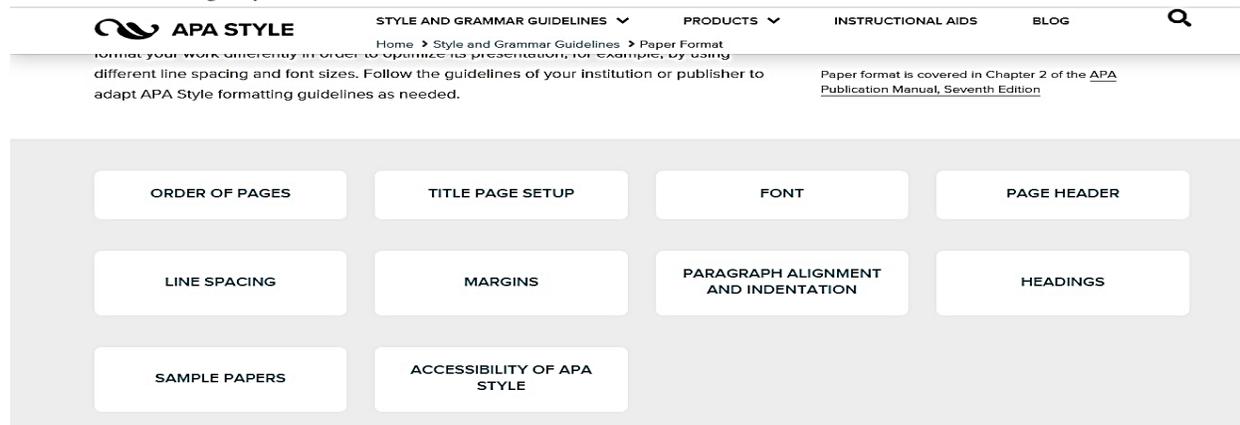
Problems. The authors concur with previous researchers (e.g., Bian & Wang, 2016; Hinkel, 2004; Prihantoro, 2016) that academic writing is often challenging for EFL students. One of the challenges is to follow writing styles appropriately (Gunawan & Aziza, 2017), such as APA (7th edition).

practices in using SOM to solve those problems and SOM potential.

After that, the authors communicated actively through the *WhatsApp* application and discussed parts of the paper that needed revisions and more elaborated ideas. Finally, the first author (C) read and checked the accounts presented in the next section several times. C then emailed the paper and asked the second author (M) to double-check all ideas presented in that section. According to Link et al. (2014); Ary et al. (2019), this peer debriefing technique might enhance the credibility of the stories presented in a qualitative study. The authors allow readers of this paper to make personal connections to the accounts and modify any ideas or SOM practices to work well in their classrooms or teaching and learning situations.

For example, when visiting the APA websites (see Figure 1), the authors can see ten different categories of formatting to follow. It might not be feasible for academic writing lecturers to explain all those formats to their students in just one or two (online synchronous) classroom sessions.

Figure 1
APA Formatting Style



Note. For more details, visit <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format>.

Solutions. In that case, the lecturers can record their APA formatting explanations using SOM, upload the recorded video to their YouTube channel (e.g., like what Kauffman, 2020; Muller, 2020 did) and assign their students to watch the video outside the class. If not comfortable, the lecturers can save the recording on their laptop and upload it to their Learning Management System (LMS), such as *Moodle*, *Edmodo*, *Google Classroom*, or *Schoology*, so only students in the class can download and watch the screencast video. Using available screencast APA-related videos on YouTube might be an option too. Nevertheless, as research indicates, a screencast-video lecturer should be short (e.g., around five to 10 minutes) and cover major issues in the course content, *not* the minor ones (Kilickaya, 2016).

Giving Screencast-Video Feedback

Problems. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, some lecturers in an academic writing class usually ask their students to

SOM potential. Previous studies reported the potential of using screencast-based videos to support students' learning. In their study of a cohort of 108 first-year undergraduate students, Morris and Chikwa (2014) reported that most respondents watched screencast videos several times from home to understand a topic. It is not always feasible to comprehend everything only from the classroom lectures. Specifically, students can pause, slow down, rewind, and watch the videos repeatedly to learn a topic (Cowie & Sakui, 2020) at their own learning pace. In an experimental study with 77 undergraduates in New England, Fallon et al. (2018) concluded that "the students accessing screencasts outperformed students who referred to the *APA Manual* on tests of APA knowledge and error correction on a Microsoft Word document" (p. 330).

print their paper and submit it to them. Then, the lecturers typically give written feedback (e.g., by circling or highlighting some

phrases or sentences and writing some suggestions) on the same paper. However, providing this type of written feedback might not be possible in the current coronavirus pandemic.

Solutions. In response, some teachers use SOM to give screencast video feedback to their students' writing (e.g., see Jati, 2017; Santosa, 2020b). With this type of feedback, the students can watch their lecturer's video that gave them comments, highlighted some words or sentences, and discussed their writing contents (Dewi & Jati, 2017), "providing more individualized feedback and greater detail" (Kılıçkaya, 2016, p. 86). The students can pause and repeatedly watch the recorded feedback outside the classroom; therefore, SOM might play a role in their "self-paced learning" (Kılıçkaya, 2016, p. 85). The students can also learn from writing problems on their classmates' papers, especially when teachers upload the recorded feedback on YouTube (e.g., like Jati's and Santosa's videos) and allow all their students in the writing classroom to look at one another's feedback.

SOM potential. This screencast video feedback has some other advantages, as reported by previous researchers. For example, it can afford more detailed feedback for students, create a sense of teachers' social presence through the added visual and audio feedback, improve students' connections to their teacher, and, therefore,

Making a Digital Video Presentation

Problems. Some university students are sometimes nervous or not ready to do their f2f classroom presentation, indicated by some pauses, confusions, and hesitations on

motivate the students to revise their work well (Cheng & Li, 2020). The video feedback was also found to help EFL first-semester university students improve their academic writing performances (see Dewi & Jati, 2017). In an argumentative writing classroom, some university students also preferred watching and hearing written feedback through a SOM video rather than reading written feedback from their peers or lecturer on their written work (Maharani & Santosa, 2021). Solhi and Eğinli (2020) also highlighted that video feedback significantly affected students' writing content and organization and therefore, might help students in their learning (Yiğit & Seferoğlu, 2021). It might also be suitable to the learning style of the 21st-century students – known as gen Z in today's classroom (Bush, 2021). However, teachers need to understand that not all students find this video feedback fruitful. Therefore, teachers should prioritize what to record in their screencast video feedback, such as only recording any comments that might be challenging to understand from teachers' text-only feedback (Cheng & Li, 2020). Moreover, as teachers possibly need more time to create their screencast-video feedback and send the video file to their students, we agree with Kılıçkaya (2016) that giving the screencast-video feedback might be practicable only for small classes, *not* the large ones (e.g., consisting of more than 15-20 students).

what to say in their talk. As a result, the students exceed the allocated presentation time (Mali, 2018), get a low presentation

score, and they usually cannot have another chance to redo their performance.

Solutions. In that case, assigning students to make a video presentation using SOM (e.g., watch Santosa, 2020a) might innovate the traditional classroom presentation, specifically in the current COVID-19 situation where the f2f classroom meetings are still prohibited. The innovation can be done as the students can do their presentation at home and do not need to present f2f directly in front of their classmates. Recently, the trend of doing the video presentation was also experienced by the first author when he joined the 18th Jogja English Teacher Association (JETA) Conference. All presenters were asked to record their 10-minute video presentations and submit their videos before the conference day. The moderator could play the video for exactly 10 minutes; therefore, he could save more time doing the question-and-answer session (watch UKDW Yogyakarta, 2021).

SOM potential. When assigned to make the video presentation using SOM, some EFL university students said that (Mali, 2018, pp. 14-15):

Doing a presentation using SOM was entirely different. When we mispronounce a word even at the end of our recording, we can retake the recording from the beginning to make our digital presentation look good (student 1); we can practice our speaking skills. It is like a mirror. We can see and listen to how we spoke to evaluate parts in which we still made mistakes (student 2).

The excerpts above indicate that the SOM might be used as a digital mirror that students can use to see themselves talking, evaluate their speaking, and make necessary improvements until they are satisfied with their speaking performance. Abbajay (2020) also acknowledged the importance of recording a presentation session and taking some time to playback, review the recording, and look for areas that might need improvement or areas that have worked well to have a satisfying virtual presentation. To improve students' presentation skills, this practice assists their technical and conceptual abilities in delivering effective and engaging video presentation materials (Luongo, 2015; Martin & Martin, 2015).

Final Words

The authors have described the practices of using SOM for EFL-related teaching and learning purposes. It is hoped that the affordances of SOM can be explored further in other (Indonesian) EFL classrooms. Empirical studies also need to confirm or refute what the authors have discussed in this paper, e.g., whether assigning EFL students to watch screencast APA-related videos can help them comprehend APA formatting in their

academic writing class well. It might also be interesting to investigate if EFL students who practice and record their presentation using SOM (group 1) will outperform those who practice their presentation without using SOM (group 2) when these groups of students are asked to do a classroom presentation. Practically, three speaking lecturers can be given a speaking rubric to score the speaking performances of those groups of students.

Besides ideas of using SOM as described in this paper, SOM might also be used to create virtual field trips, book review trailers, tourism videos, and virtual pen pals (as suggested by Screencast-O-Matic, 2020). These can be ideas for future explorations of SOM, especially how they can provide language learning opportunities for university students in EFL contexts.

Last, we believe that teachers have to use technology to serve educational purposes. They should not jump on the bandwagon

because other people do; many teachers use technology without considering whether it helps, or gives true value to educational objectives (Torat, 2000). It is not a matter of infusing a course of study with the latest and the most sophisticated educational technology but is more on utilizing a technology that suits the unique needs and interests of teachers and students (Chaney et al., 2010), especially those of gen Z in the 21st-century learning era (Bush, 2021).

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Authors' Short Bios:

Yustinus Calvin Gai Mali is a researcher and lecturer in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana in Salatiga, Indonesia. He is also a board member of iTELL (Indonesia Technology Enhanced Language Learning). Calvin earned his PhD in Language, Literacy and Technology Education from Washington State University, Pullman, WA, USA. His research interests are in the areas of English Language Teaching, Education Technology, and Literacy Education.

Made Hery Santosa is a researcher and lecturer in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali, Indonesia. He has published articles, books, and chapters in national and international contexts while serving as an editor and a reviewer in SAGE Open, Springer, TESOL, TESL EJ, Kasetsart, among others. His research interests include English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Digital Literacy, and Innovative Pedagogies.