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The Challenges in Teaching English Faced by English Lecturers in South Kalimantan in Transition Situation After Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English in a non-native English-speaking country presents various challenges for lecturers, particularly in the post-pandemic educational context. English lecturers are expected not only to master the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—but also to effectively manage classrooms and maintain students' engagement. This study aims to explore the challenges faced by English lecturers in South Kalimantan after two years of educational adaptation following the COVID-19 pandemic. A qualitative approach was employed involving four lecturers from different universities who taught in both English and non-English departments. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires consisting of 12 questions. The findings revealed four major challenges: (1) technical issues, particularly unstable internet connectivity, which affected the effectiveness of online and blended learning; (2) declining student motivation and participation due to students' familiarity with online learning; (3) limited digital literacy among lecturers and students in selecting and integrating digital learning applications; and (4) classroom management and lecturers' readiness to respond to educational changes in the post-pandemic era. The study highlights the importance of strengthening digital literacy, providing continuous professional development, and expanding technology-enhanced teaching practices. It also recommends that teacher education institutions and policymakers provide sustainable training to support the effective integration of technology in both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments.

Keywords: Challenges, Teaching English, Transition Situation.

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic is one of the causes that affect the educational system all over the world. In early 2020, this was a historical event of human life when all sectors had to adapt to new conditions. The Covid-19 pandemic alters the entire classroom learning process. The government has begun to implement various measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus,

including social and physical distancing. This decision had an impact on the education system in Indonesia, whether elementary, secondary, or higher education, with changes made in the implementation of the learning process via a circular letter from the Ministry of Education and Culture. An effort is being made to transform the entire learning process into a fully online mode (Gunawan et al., 2020; Naciri et al., 2020; Noer et al., 2021). In the educational system, for example, before the pandemic, we could have interactions between lecturers and students without worrying about anything. The lecturers came to the class, gave the material, and then interacted with the students while having a discussion and evaluating the teaching process itself. It was kind of simply a thing that the lecturer usually did before the pandemic. Moreover, when the pandemic came, all of the government's rules forbade all outdoor activities, including face-to-face teaching, which suddenly made the lectures adapted to the condition.

Teachers and lecturers must adapt the learning that is typically done in class and switch to an online class, so students must become accustomed to learning online. These institutions have efficiently completed their educational programs and activities by supporting a variety of online applications, allowing for distant completion of the education process (Shambour & Abu-Hashem, 2022; Fitria et al., 2022).

Every lecture demanded the use of technology or Web 2.0 to support the teaching process. The limitation of social activities forced the lecturer to teach and integrate the technology. This was not an example like that, the situation when there was a gap between the generation as the students and the generation as the lecturer. The current Coronavirus pandemic, or Covid-19 disaster, has an impact on many sectors, including business and education. The requirement to maintain social distancing, wear masks, wash hands, and avoid crowds encourages the teaching and learning process (PBM) in schools and colleges to shift from face-to-face (offline) to online learning. As a result, school administration, teachers, students, and parents were all forced to adjust to these new circumstances. They are beginning to recognize the importance of digital literacy so that the learning process can continue, even if it is still difficult for schools, students, and parents (Sartipa, 2021).

The students born in a digital era were familiar with all of the technology and could adapt to it all easily, different from the lecturers where not all of the lecturers were born in the same era. Being adaptable to the technology itself was not an easy thing. As lecturers, they must learn what applications can be used to support their teaching in every skill. How much time was spent using this application, what application was used for assessing, and what other questions were asked? Those are examples of the challenges on the lecturer's side. In addition, controlling online classes is also challenging. When lecturers do online teaching using the Zoom application, they

must make sure that all of the participants are still engaging with the class itself. Sometimes, they found that some of the students turned off their cameras the whole teaching class, and the lecturer must have a solution to make the students keep turned on their cameras even though turning on their cameras does not necessarily focus on our material, at least, the lecturers can watch them out. They encounter other issues, such as quota and internet connection issues, interference with the device used, and environmental conditions while teaching online, even if they do not know the students well (Fitria et al., 2022).

After the pandemic, the status changed to a new normal era. It can be calculated that the educational system used online teaching and learning for 1.5 years. It started in early 2020 and ended in the middle of 2021. Then, starting from the middle of 2021 till the end of 2021, most of the school's and campus's policies enforced blended learning as the solution for the teaching process. Blended learning is one of the mixed methods between online and offline learning. Since the government promoted the method, every school uses blended learning online. It provides a positive environment through various forms of online and offline communication (Geng et al., 2019; Mohamed, 2022; Fitriani; Herman, Tatang; Fatimah, 2022). In early 2022, because now it is time for a new normal era, the teaching process will be in full offline mode. The changes in the policy from offline mode before the pandemic to full online mode in the pandemic, then blended and offline mode post-pandemic, were interesting to figure out. This research aims to describe the challenges English lecturers in south Kalimantan faced in the transition after Covid-19 face in teaching English.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education (Mushtaha et al., 2022; Fitria et al., 2022). In order to comprehend the difficulties associated with online instruction during COVID-19, Fitria et al. (2022) and the studies it referenced primarily used qualitative, questionnaire-based methodologies. Although they provided insightful information about the experiences of lecturers, the majority were limited by their self-reported nature, institution-specific circumstances, and limited reach. These drawbacks highlight the necessity of more extensive, multi-perspective studies with more detailed, triangulated data in further investigations. The study also used a standardized questionnaire that addressed institutional, technical, pedagogical, and psychological aspects to gauge the extent and difficulties of implementing online learning. Both quantitative and qualitative information about instructors' experiences during the COVID-19 epidemic were offered by the responses.

According to UNESCO, more than 188 countries had implemented nationwide school and university closures as of April 10, 2020, affecting more than 91% of the world's student

population (UNESCO n.d.; Hew et al., 2020). All face-to-face lessons were canceled during these school closures, forcing many institutions, including our own, to immediately transition from face-to-face in-person learning to entirely online lessons (Hew et al., 2020). A mixed-methods study by Hew et al. (2020) looked at the pedagogical approaches and efficacy of fully online flipped classes in higher education during the COVID-19 epidemic. In two courses—E-learning Strategies and Engaging Adult Learners—offered at a large Asian university in both traditional flipped and fully online flipped formats, the study compared the learning outcomes and instructional strategies of the students. Students' and teachers' qualitative remarks were used to infer challenges rather than directly quantify them using instruments. These reflections highlighted challenges including maintaining interaction in a totally online setting, managing engagement, and adjusting to technology. In order to evaluate learning performance, the methodology involved comparing students' final course grades across formats and using grounded theory to qualitative data analysis in order to pinpoint effective teaching strategies.

Teachers are limited in their ability to convey the materials since different learning approaches are employed. In the past, educators used to exhibit originality, adaptability, and diversity in their teaching strategies, tailoring them to the subject matter, regulations, circumstances, classroom setting, and other elements. However, because learning is done online, teachers have limited ability to explain. This also presents difficulties for teachers and students when carrying out learning activities (Sartipa, 2021). Teachers face many challenges as they transition from face-to-face to online learning, which occurs unexpectedly and without prior planning. Educators have used online platforms to reach out to students, webinars have become temporary classrooms, parents have been asked to monitor at home, and students have been deprived of social interaction between peers (Rosalina et al., 2020). A qualitative study on teachers' difficulties with online learning during the COVID-19 epidemic was carried out by Rosalina et al. (2020). They determined problems with pedagogy, infrastructure, and generational disparities using open-ended surveys. Although the study offered valuable insights into the experiences of teachers, its limitations in terms of sample size, breadth, and design indicate that more extensive research is required to draw more comprehensive conclusions. The study by Mustahah et al. (2022) was restricted to one university in the United Arab Emirates (University of Sharjah), despite offering a comprehensive picture of the difficulties and user views of online learning during the COVID-19 epidemic. Although the quantitative method provided broad trends, it did not thoroughly examine participant experiences or the impact of their varied social, cultural, and technical backgrounds. Furthermore, the study did not evaluate how the suggested blended learning model might be modified to meet the unique requirements of theoretical and

practical disciplines or how it would be implemented over the long run.

Most of the previous studies just find out the challenges from offline/ conventional teaching to online teaching while the Pandemic has spread out to the world. In addition, this research focuses on finding out the challenges after COVID-19 itself and how it affects the condition in the classroom when the students begin offline learning again after two years of survival with Covid-19

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed qualitative research because the research examined the challenges faced by English lecturers when teaching English in a transition situation after the pandemic. Before data collection was initiated, the participants were given informed consent to show their willingness to participate in this study. Four participants were recruited from this study. They were involved based on several criteria. First, they teach English at higher education levels. In addition, they have been teaching for more than three years. And the last qualification is that they teach English to English students and the non-English student department. Based on that selection and their consent, there were four lecturers who came from different campuses and with different students. One of the lectures taught English to students in the non-English Department. The instruments used for this research are interviews and open-ended questionnaires, which have 12 questions related to the challenges in the way to deliver the material, design the effective classroom, technical problems, the policies, and the facilities from the campus. The questionnaire was spread out through Google Forms and filled out by the participants. Then, the researcher interviewed the participants to get more data. Regarding the data analysis, this study deployed thematic analysis, which was reflected in the responses from the participants. Before elaborating on the connection with related theories, researchers selected the codes as the key important points uttered by participants addressing the interview questions. Afterward, the researchers did the iterative process to highlight the main themes of information delivered in order to be connected in correlated theories around the raising concepts to be manually analyzed by researchers through inter-rater processes among three different raters involved in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results, here are the challenges faced by English lecturers in South Kalimantan in teaching English in Transition situations or post-COVID-19.

It starts with the differences between before the Pandemic the while pandemic and the new normal or transition era. All of the lectures agree that all situations have different

conditions and challenges. The first challenge is in terms of the students; the lecturers also agree that they found the difference in the way how the students can catch the material. One of them says that before the pandemic, most of the students were active in class. Then, during the Pandemic, they came in the synchronous class through Zoom or g-meet that the lecturer shared, but the problem was just four till five students of the class turned on their cameras, and the rest of the class turned off their cameras. These conditions make the lecturers aware and take control of their students to make sure that the students are still on track. Those are also related to the previous study from Fitria et al. (2022), which stated that English lecturers face additional challenges when conducting online learning, such as 1) difficulty mastering the class and controlling students. 2) Students are not more engaged, enthusiastic, and interactive in online lectures; 3) difficulty determining/assigning assignments/projects; and 4) difficulty holding mid-term or end-of-semester exams online, both written and oral exams. 5) Difficulty evaluating/assessing students while they are learning online. 6) Concerning their students' abilities and grades. Then, when in a transition situation or *New Normal Era,* the lecturers found that because most of the students were already in a Pandemic situation when the lecturers had the discussion session that needed interaction between the lecturers and the students, the lecturers found that students were more rigid in interaction because they were accustomed to interacting online than offline. They feel more confident having an interaction through written than oral. It also makes group discussions between students feel more inactive. Lecturer VY said, *"Yes there is a difference; before COVID-19, students interacted and communicated more openly with each other, but after COVID-19, the interaction became a bit stiff or awkward. The negative impact was of course, related to group learning, which required good interaction, communication, and cooperation. To rebuild an atmosphere of learning and interaction like before COVID-19, I try to apply various strategies such as continuing group discussions or collaborative learning".*

The second question is related to the teachers' knowledge related to their perception of online teaching and what online teaching was before, while, and after the pandemic. Most of them have the same answer related to online classes. They agree that online classes can be conducted at flexible times and places. They also agree that online teaching means that you need some media and a stable connection to deliver the material to your students, but this is not enough to carry out online teaching because you must also make sure that your students have a good connection to receive the online material and here is sometimes the challenges faced by them. This is also in line with Puspitasari and Devi's study (2021), which sought to ascertain the attitudes of lecturers at one of the Sumedang Regency's private universities toward online learning. Their research discovered that they encountered difficulties, such as an

unstable internet network (Fitria et al., 2022). Inconsistent network connections in the student's residential location and a limited internet allowance are among the issues (Fitria et al., 2022). They all agree that a stable connection is the main foundation for conducting online teaching itself because it will be useless even though you design the good material and the good media if there is no connection to conduct the online teaching. They also approve that online teaching before the Pandemic, while the New Normal era were different. The lecturer agree that teaching online before pandemic almost rarely done but when Pandemic came, online teaching was the only solution to keep doing the teaching and learning itself but in new normal era, now online learning is something that is normal and can be done when the lecturers cannot attend offline to campus.

The third question is related to delivering the content to the class. Lecturer NR agreed that online class management was one of the main challenges to making sure that the content prepared by can be received by the students. It was because, when he did online teaching, he found that the students turned off their cameras. He also agreed that online learning during the Pandemic and the *New Normal Era* were the same. Lecturer IN also had the same answer as Lecturer NH. She agreed that in online teaching, we could not directly see the response of the students related to the content itself, especially when the students also turned off their cameras. Technical problems like internet connections are also problems in online teaching, but in the New Normal Era, she agreed that delivering the content is easier because she can do offline teaching. *"During a pandemic, we cannot see firsthand the student's response to the explanation of the material when giving explanations. This is also because they sometimes turn off the cam even though, at the beginning, they were warned to continue to be on cam during lectures. In addition, the implementation of inline classes is not optimal because it is constrained by several things, such as problematic internet networks and so on. For post-pandemic, it's not too hard because you can already carry out face-to-face lectures. For online material delivery, students can access it through SIMARI e-learning before and during lecturers"*. This is also in line with the study from Khaerati et al. (2021), which stated that the learning media apps used by lecturers in online learning use Zoom and provide materials or assignments via Google Classroom and Edmodo. Online lectures are carried out at home with smooth signal conditions, and the learning method used is discussion forums. The obstacles faced during online lectures are difficulties in delivering material (less effective/limited communication with students) (Fitria et al., 2022). Lecturer RH had a similar statement. She is the lecturer who teaches English to students in the non-English Department. She agreed that delivering learning content during the Pandemic is more complex than in the Transition Era. This was because, during the pandemic, the lecture depended on the connection and media, where they

could do offline learning in the Transition Situation. Lecturer VY also agreed that internet connection was the main problem in delivering the content in every situation (before the Pandemic, during the Pandemic, and Transition Situation/New Normal).

The fourth question is related to the transition between online and blended learning. Lecturer NH had the opinion that during the pandemic, to return the spirit of the lecturer to use the variety of online media/ web 2.0 for teaching while offline/ after COVID-19, classes are more limited. Lecturer IN had a different answer. She said that she hadn't found any problems related to the transition between online and blended learning. Lecturer RH had a similar opinion to Lecturer IN. She answered that there were no significant challenges related to the transition; she thought that blended was more manageable than full online mode because she had adapted to the condition in the Pandemic. In addition, lecturer VY had a detailed statement related to the transition between online and blended learning. She said that building the offline learning system was problematic because most of the students were familiar with the online system. Also, they feel laziness from the students coming to campus; moreover, they are not focused on the material shared by the lecturer because of the way they learned before just off the camera while listening to the lecturer's voice via Zoom or G-Meet in online class. Those reasons are the challenges faced when blended learning is applied now in a transition situation. To solve those problems, lecture VY also tries to upgrade her teaching skills by combining every lesson with technology, sometimes inviting the students to learn outside the classroom, like the language laboratory, regional library, or the city park. Here's her statement: *"Rebuilding an offline learning system is one of the difficult things, where students are used to learning online, sometimes they feel too lazy to come to campus, and also they do not focus on the material because they are used to studying online with an off-camera, one of the obstacles when offline learning is re-implemented. To overcome this, I continue to make updates in the learning process. Sometimes, I change the place and atmosphere of learning by studying at the regional library, in the language lab, or at the park".*

The fifth question is related to how to deliver effective English lessons offline and online after COVID-19 and what the difficulties are when you want to conduct an effective learning situation in a transition situation. Lecturer NH said that an effective English lesson means that the lecturer can present the three important components: cognitive, social, and teaching presence. In addition, lecturer IN had a different opinion; she said that effective learning means the students get the knowledge transfer successfully, and it was also supported by a good environment so the goal of learning itself is achieved. The difficulties related to creating effective learning felt by lecturer IN was making the students come to the class on time. This problem is also similar to Lecturer VY because most of the students are already

accustomed to online classes, so they do not need to come to class. Furthermore, lecturer RH said that effective learning means the lecturers can make the students active in their classes. The difficulties are related to awakening the students' motivation to be active in class. Lastly, lecturer VY stated that effective learning means the lecturer can apply suitable rules and procedures in the learning process, such as controlling the students when their camera is turned off. However, the effectiveness of learning is determined not only by the medium but also by digital literacy. Individuals' interest, attitude, and ability to use digital technology and communication tools to access, manage, integrate, analyze, and evaluate information, build new knowledge, and effectively communicate with others is referred to as digital literacy (Sartipa, 2021)

The sixth question related to guidelines about how to conduct online/offline/or blended learning from the institution. Three of the lecturers stated that they had guidelines from their institution. In contrast with lecturer RH, she said that she had not found any guidelines from her institution. Most of the lectures do agree that the guidelines make the process of teaching and learning easier because they have accurate standards for teaching and learning itself. Furthermore, some of the lecturers also agree that if there were no guidelines from the institution, they feel that condition makes the process complicated because every lecturer has their own opinion and perception to conduct the teaching and learning itself. In contrast with lecturer RH, because she had not found any guidelines from her institution, she thought that it was all right and she could do it by herself to consider which one was the best one for her class.

The seventh question related to the most difficult challenges in conducting English subjects in online, offline, or blended transition situations. Lecturer NH stated how to integrate technology in teaching because, as lecturers, if we are not familiar with the technology itself, it will be just accessories that are less helpful in enhancing students' proficiency skills. Moreover, lecturer IN gave her detailed answer; she said that online learning is the readiness of lecturers and students to use technology and technical problems such as internet networks and offline learning: classroom management where there are still some students who are late, although not often and for blended learning: it is not possible because they are used to it. The next one was from lecturer RH, who said that the challenge was the presence of students. Due to the uncertainty of offline and online schedules, many are unable to take part in offline activities for the ultimate reason; even online, they cannot participate for signal reasons. Social contact and interaction are necessary for students to feel connected and to form interpersonal relationships; however, interaction alone does not guarantee student

participation in the cognitive investigation process, nor does it guarantee that cognitive presence is formed automatically (Rosalina et al., 2020). And the last one from lecturer VY said that the hardest challenge is internet access online. When learning is offline, the problem is student interaction, and in blended learning, you have to keep learning using applications that support blended learning. The researchers also asked the participants about the intensity of using technology pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and in the new normal era/transition situation. Most lecturers agree that before the pandemic, they rarely used technology for teaching. In contrast, after the pandemic came and spread worldwide, the lecturers joined the online webinar, which talked about online learning and the suitable applications that can be used for teaching. Now, they are familiar with the technology and are starting to integrate and use the application when teaching, although in the New Normal, the use of technology is not as intense as in the Pandemic. Here is the opinion from lecturer IN, *"There is a sizable difference where in the pre-pandemic period, most of us still used conventional learning systems and rarely used technology in the learning process. Furthermore, when experiencing a pandemic, we are all "forced" to be able to adapt to situations and all things technological in the implementation of learning, such as the use of Zoom, G-meet, Google Classroom etc., as learning media. During the transitional period, the use of technology in the learning process is still often used, but not as intensely as during the pandemic, more as an addition and complement such as using online quizzes and so on".*

The next question the researchers ask all of the lecturers is what the most influential things are in teaching and learning English in a transition situation. Most of them agree that classroom management, technology, and the students' and lecturers' readiness were the elements that influenced teaching and learning English more. Those are also in line with Sartipa (2021). Teachers should continue to improve their abilities to develop material, deliver material, and implement good classroom management in order to improve the quality of learning provided. Lecturer VY said, *"Readiness of lecturers in using technology because there are still lecturers who don't really know how to use teaching media or digital/internet-based learning applications."* The last question related to which period has the most challenges in conducting effective teaching and learning English. Lecturers NH, IN, and VY chose the Pandemic as the most challenging period because sometimes the internet connection was the biggest challenge, and we cannot meet in person to explain the material deeply. Lecturer NH said*, "Of course, during a pandemic. Even though technology can help, because technological infrastructure such as networks sometimes doesn't support it, it becomes a significant obstacle, and not to mention the digital literacy of lecturers who are lacking in teaching English is an obstacle in itself"*. In line with Lecturer NH, Lecturer IN and VY have the similar answer. Lecturer IN stated, "*During a pandemic, because we are really faced with a situation where we must be able and able to be active and*

creative in utilizing technology so that learning processes and objectives can be carried out and achieved even in a pandemic situation." In addition, lecturer VY said, *"Pandemic period. Because all the creative space for both lecturers and students is very limited"*. Those answers contrast with Lecturer RH. Lecturer RH chose after the Pandemic Period/ Transition situation, which had many challenges in teaching English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the challenges faced by English lecturers in South Kalimantan are as follows: the first is the facilitation or technical problems like internet connection because internet connection is the main part of ensuring successful teaching and learning then followed by the application used for delivering the material. This also includes the lecturer's digital literacy ability to operate and analyze which application is suitable for the material and skill. The second related to the affective factor of the students. The lack of motivation of the students is also the challenge that must be considered by the lecturer. The lecturer must have a good strategy and technique to create an interactive classroom to build high motivation among the students. This is because, for almost 2 years, they have been familiar with online classes, and they do not need to come to the class to learn. Then, in a transition situation, they lack the motivation to come to class on time. The last is related to classroom management itself. The lecturers are required to manage their classrooms well. Starting to design the material, learn to integrate the technology to adapt with transition situation and deal with the students who lack motivation. The lecturer needs to make sure that the teaching process includes the three presences: teaching, cognitive, and social. Those are the challenges faced by the lecturers in South Kalimantan related to teaching English after the pandemic era/transition.

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It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of English language teaching practices by providing meaningful insights into the challenges encountered by English lecturers during the post-pandemic educational transition and by supporting the continuous improvement of technology-enhanced language education.

ETHICAL STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles for research involving human participants and complied with institutional research guidelines as well as internationally recognized ethical standards, including the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Prior to data collection, all participants received clear information regarding the objectives, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality of the collected data, and the intended use of the research findings.

Informed consent was obtained from all participating English lecturers before they completed the open-ended questionnaires and participated in the semi-structured interviews. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

Participants' identities and institutional affiliations were kept anonymous throughout the study. All collected data were treated confidentially and used solely for academic and research purposes. No personally identifiable or sensitive information was disclosed in this publication.

The authors declare that this research was conducted with honesty, transparency, objectivity, and academic integrity throughout all stages of the research process.

CRediT AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

First Author: Conceptualization, Methodology, Literature Search, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft, Correspondence.

Second Author: Methodology, Validation, Literature Screening, Writing – Review & Editing, Data Interpretation.

Third Author: Supervision, Validation, Critical Review, Methodological Evaluation, Writing – Review & Editing.

Fourth Author: Supervision, Project Administration, Resources, Academic Review, Writing – Review & Editing.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript. All authors made substantial intellectual contributions to the conception of the study, interpretation of findings, critical revision of the manuscript, and approval of the final version for publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors have no known competing financial interests, institutional affiliations, or personal relationships that could have influenced the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of this study. The findings and conclusions presented in this article are based solely on the empirical data collected from the participants.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participating lecturers, the complete interview transcripts and questionnaire responses are not publicly available. Anonymized data, interview protocols, questionnaire instruments, coding procedures, and supplementary materials related to the qualitative analysis may be provided for academic and non-commercial research purposes upon reasonable request, subject to institutional ethical considerations.

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