

Challenges Faced by English Teachers in Online Teaching During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Online learning is learning that takes place without the need for teachers and students to physically meet. This study aims to find out the challenges of English teachers in online teaching during the pandemic. This research used a descriptive-qualitative research method. The participants were six teachers from two junior high schools in Tegal. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, thus validity and reliability were checked by Correlation Product Moment in SPSS. There were only 25 valid questions from the questionnaire which sig. (2-tailed) < significant level (α) 0.05. The data were reliable because they had a Cronbach alpha > 0.6. There were five valid interview questions that the contents were appropriate for research purposes. The finding showed that 76% of teachers agreed that family support determined the successful learning process, 73% of teachers agreed that teacher readiness in online teaching was important, and 70% of teachers agreed that the availability of facilities, credit, and environmental conditions students must be available, 68% of teachers agreed that internet connectivity should be provided, 66% of teachers agreed that time management supports the effective learning process. Teachers must be ready and be able to overcome obstacles during online learning.

Keywords: *pandemic covid-19, teaching online, teacher challenge*

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a virus. This virus first appeared in Indonesia in March 2020. Several industries experienced a crisis due to the spread of the virus. Not only the economic sector is affected, but also the education sector. To avoid this virus, most governments in the world have closed several activities such as educational institutions and replaced them with online learning.

Online learning is learning that takes place without the need for teachers and students to meet physically. Technology is very important in online education. It serves not only as a background but also as a context for instruction in teaching, as it can be the location where the teaching and learning process takes place (Major, 2015). The

technology is compatible with smartphones, laptops, iPads, and tablets. In teaching online, classes need technology and the Internet as an enhancement of what is happening in the face-to-face classroom (Fitria, 2020). The definition of teaching online during the pandemic is that teachers and students do not go to school, but they teach and study from home using technology. Teachers must also have an important role in designing classrooms, apart from having a good internet connection (Welch et al., 2015).

So, teachers must set up and adapt online classes for teaching materials, so that the teaching and learning process can continue. After the researcher observed that teachers at junior high school in Tegal said that they had challenges during online learning, such as when students went to the next class, it turned out that there were students who had not given feedback for their assignment, there were students who did not have technology tools, thus hindering online learning. Based on the problems stated above, this study aims to determine (1) what challenges are faced by English teachers in online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic and (2) how teachers overcome the challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is a type of virus (SARS-CoV-2) that was discovered in late December 2019 in Wuhan, China. Covid-19 infection can cause mild, moderate, or severe symptoms. The most common clinical symptoms are fever (temperature above 38 degrees Celsius), cough, and difficulty breathing. The spread of Covid-19 not only has an impact on the declining economic sector, but its impact is now also being felt in the world of education. Many countries, including Indonesia, have policies that prohibit all educational practices, requiring the government and related institutions to provide alternative educational processes for students who are unable to complete the educational process in educational institutions (Abidah et al., 2020)

The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has ordered all education units to run online learning starting from March 24, 2020, due to the increasing spread of Covid-19 and maintaining the health of students, teachers, and all education personnel. This policy requires students and teachers to conduct learning from home. This completely replaces face-to-face learning in the classroom with online learning which may last until the end of the semester due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is a new challenge for both students and teachers to run online learning.

There are two types of online teaching: synchronous and asynchronous (Indarti et al., 2015). Education can be associated with the terms synchronous and asynchronous. It has the potential to be used in online teaching and learning. As a result, no physical encounters took place. Students can access the e-learning environment at any time and download papers or chat with teachers or classmates via asynchronous e-learning, meanwhile, media such as video conferencing are widely used to facilitate synchronous e-learning (Indarti et al., 2015). It has the potential to assist online learners in building learning communities. By asking and answering questions in real-time, students and teachers see synchronous e-learning as more friendly and less irritating. In other words, synchronous sessions assist e-learners in developing a sense of community rather than isolation.

The pandemic comes as a surprise to a teacher who finds their way of teaching or general operations disrupted by the new way of learning. This may be a considerable difficulty for teachers who are not accustomed to or educated in the creation and delivery of educational materials via an online platform (Farooq et al., 2020). Formal training in developing and presenting materials may be required of teachers doing e-learning, as the course materials must combine both instructional and visual design to be effective. Teachers spend more time preparing for e-learning than they do for offline learning, resulting in increased effort as the volume of learning resources increases (Pratama et al., 2020; Sulistianingsih et al., 2020). Due to the course being fully online, teachers may additionally have difficulty assessing and sustaining students' participation in both asynchronous and synchronous contexts (Farooq et al., 2020). This situation may affect assessment components being delivered in e-learning system (Pratama et al., 2020). Teachers also find challenges when implementing online learning in communication with student's attendance, and lack of teacher ability to apply online learning effectively (Hidayatullah (2021).

In general, various challenges in teaching English are lack of English exposure, classroom size, and shortage of English teachers (Songbatumis, 2017; Taufiqulloh et al., 2018). Teaching English as a foreign language is a difficult endeavor in regions where English is not widely spoken. Due to a lack of English exposure, students have few opportunities to use English. Khan (2011) suggested that a lack of English aims demotivates students to practice and grasp the language due to a lack of foundation

information. Furthermore, due to a lack of English exposure, it is becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to motivate students to use English (Khan, 2011).

Moreover, Emery (2012) states that one of the most often mentioned issues among English teachers is "overcrowded classes and the effect that such a setting may have on teaching and learning." Sulistianingsih (2018) also cites classroom size as difficulty in teaching English. Several difficulties are also associated with teaching large classes, including fixed or difficult-to-move desks and chairs, students seated in rows, limited space for the teacher and students to move around the classroom, thin walls separating classrooms, and noise from adjacent classes. As a result, the teaching and learning processes must be comfortable and pleasurable; otherwise, the instructor may fall short of meeting students' requirements and accomplishing learning objectives.

Meanwhile, according to studies, several countries have a significant scarcity of qualified English teachers (Nunan, 2003). Emery (2012) discusses some of the concerns that develop as a result of insufficient teacher preparation, including teachers' incapacity to cope with classroom obstacles owing to a lack of training, teachers' limited language skills, and instructors hired to teach English but lack a foundation in it. The English teaching process is notoriously difficult in terms of teacher certification, language proficiency level, and training since these factors might undermine instructors' confidence (Emery, 2012). Teachers with little teaching experience may endeavor to execute instructional strategies successfully (Littlewood, 2007). It is critical for teachers to employ effective teaching methods and strategies because they must consider not only how to transmit four language skills, but also how to keep students engaged and passionate about learning and practicing English (Ansari, 2012).

Some previous writers which are related to the research project are as follows; the first one is research entitled "Impact of Corona Virus on Education: Stay Away from Schools and Colleges" by Senthilkumar & Kumari (2020). The study is based on the impact of the Coronavirus on education and it tends to find the challenges faced by teaching fraternity in schools and colleges. The result of the study was that half of the population had all the necessary tools to attend online classes. Students who have the necessary tools to attend online classes properly due to infrastructure challenges, fraternity, and teaching requires tools to conduct online classes, but they find it difficult to access the technology. It was concluded that there was no proper training regarding the

implementation of online classes by the management.

Further research is by Nartiningrum & Nugroho (2021) entitled “English Teachers’ Perspectives on Challenges, Suggestions, and Materials of Online Teaching Amidst the Global Pandemic”. This study offers 20 EFL secondary school Year 7-9 teachers’ insights regarding challenges, suggestions, and teaching materials needed during the Covid-19 outbreak. The teachers suggest that maintaining a stable internet connection should become a priority. Then, easy access to online applications and websites is deemed necessary by teachers as material sources for online teaching. The results of this study contribute to the literature on English language teaching in response to the present-day phenomenon of online learning, particularly in secondary school Year 7-9 level.

Moreover, a research conducted by Mahyoob (2020) entitled “Challenges of e-Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic by EFL Learners” aims to identify the challenges and obstacles experienced by English language learners (EFL) at Science and Arts College, Alula, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, during the transition to online learning in the second semester of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been discovered that the main issues influencing and impacting online EFL learning during Covid-19 are related to technological, academic, and communication challenges. The study results show that most EFL learners are not satisfied with continuing online learning, as they could not fulfill the expected progress in language learning performance.

According to the theories above, there are many challenges in online teaching, one of which is that teachers and students do not have good and adequate knowledge about online learning, and teachers do not have a good strategy for online teaching to make students understand the materials, which causes students to become bored with online learning. Another problem is that many locations do not have good internet connections for online learning, and many students and teachers do not have enough data packages which cause online learning to be ineffective.

METHOD

This was a qualitative study. The researchers gathered, categorized, evaluated, and concluded based on the data analysis without drawing any generalizations. The study explains the 6 English teachers’ perspectives on challenges they face in teaching online during the Covid-19 pandemic and how they overcome the challenges. The difficulties encountered by English teachers when teaching online and how they overcome them are

discussed. The researchers have three roles. The first is that of a data collector; the researchers collect data from questionnaires. The second component is the analysis; after determining the outcome of the questionnaire, the researchers analyze the data. The third step is reporting; the findings of the research should be reported, and the researchers should make conclusions.

The data used in this research are qualitative data taken from interviews and questionnaires with 6 English teachers from SMP 17 Tegal and SMP Ihsaniyah Tegal. The questionnaires are given to find out what kind of challenges are faced by an English teacher in teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. An interview is also conducted to get information about the challenges and the way the teachers overcome the matters.

A Likert-scale questionnaire is designed to get information about challenges faced by an English teachers in teaching online during the Covid-19 pandemic and how to overcome them. The researchers develop a questionnaire analysis about (1) Challenges faced by English teachers during Covid-19, (2) Availability of facilities and infrastructure, (3) Challenges that hinder online learning, and (4) English teachers' perspectives on their first experience of teaching online. When assessing data from a questionnaire, the first step is categorizing the results. The data of the Likert-Scale questions are classified from how many respondents choose to agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree which is related to challenges faced by English teachers in teaching online based on their experiences.

In addition to completing the questionnaire, the researchers conduct interviews to gather more detailed information about the subject. The researchers conduct interview data by audio recording. The researchers provide five questions to participants. In this study, researchers analyze the challenges faced by English teachers in online learning and how they overcame the challenges. Before conducting research, researchers made an appointment first so that the participants got convenience at the interview. After the interview, researchers noted down the responses of the participants.

The researchers prefer semi-structured interviews since they allow for the preparation of questions in advance. The interviews in this study were recorded using an audio recorder and transcribed results for data analysis. To ensure the validity of the study, the researchers took notes during the interview process. After that, the researchers transcribed the results of the interview into textual data. Coding analysis is used to capture

what is in the interview data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data from the questionnaire were collected from the six teachers. The questionnaire of this study was divided into five sections; teacher readiness, internet connectivity, time management, and family support. The researcher checked the validity and reliability of the Likert-Scale questions using SPSS 21. The question is valid if validating approval values (Pearson correlation) are positive. The results indicated that 25 out of 60 questions were valid because the value of r_{xy} (correlation coefficient) $> r$ table product-moment ($N_{12} = 0.576$). The table below is the blueprint of questionnaire after checking the validity and reliability:

Table 1. Blueprint of Questionnaire

No.	Aspect	Item
1.	Teacher readiness in online teaching	1-5
2.	Availability of facilities, credit, and environmental conditions.	6-10
3	Internet connectivity	11-15
4.	Time management	16-20
5.	Family Support	21-25
Total		25

After determining the validity of the questionnaire, it is necessary to test its reliability of the questionnaire. The researcher used SPSS 21 to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The criteria for the magnitude of the reliability coefficient are:

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.933	60

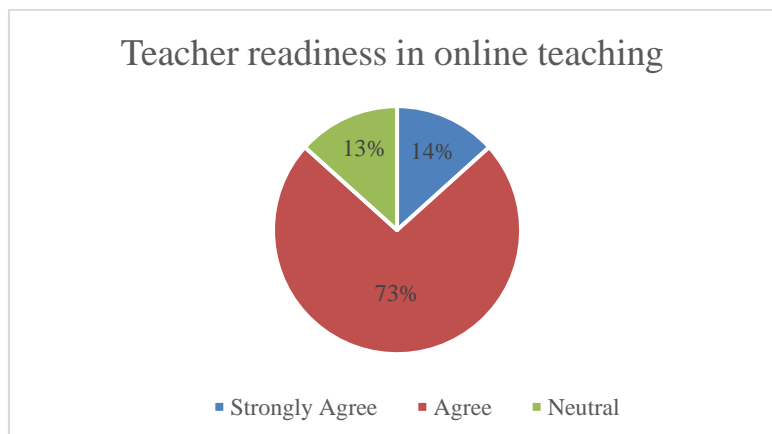


Figure 1. Teacher Readiness in Online Learning

Based on the diagram above, teachers were moved from face-to-face learning to online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers must prepare everything that will be sent via the internet, such as materials, assignments, data, or education information. Based on the results of the diagram above, which show that the aspect of teacher readiness in online teaching is 73%, it can be concluded that the teacher is prepared to face online learning. Because, in essence, the teacher must be prepared to give his students the best. It was supported by the information gathered from the interview, T (1) said:

We create a Google Classroom for each class, then we provide a code for the students. For attendance, I made a Google form, and for material I made an audio recorder that was given to students through Google Classroom. (T1)

Based on interviews teachers have been able to utilize and use technology well. Cooperman (2017) states that it is important for online teachers to know about technology or the ability of technical background to use new technology which can be delivered in teaching online both effectively and efficiently.

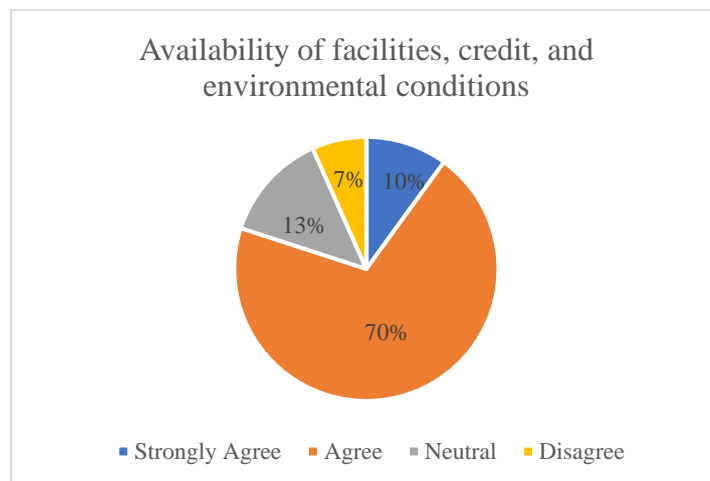


Figure 2. Availability of Facilities, Credit, and Environmental conditions

Based on the results of the diagram above, the teachers answered the questionnaire 70% on the aspect of availability of facilities, credit, and environmental conditions. So it can be concluded that the importance of the availability of facilities, credit, and environmental conditions greatly affect the success of teachers and students in implementing online learning. It was supported by the information gathered from the interview. T (4) said:

For school, I think it's adequate and students usually who don't have cellphones will be given it, then those who don't have a quota come to school to use the school's wifi.

Based on interviews, the facilities provided at the school are very adequate, such as wifi and internet quota.

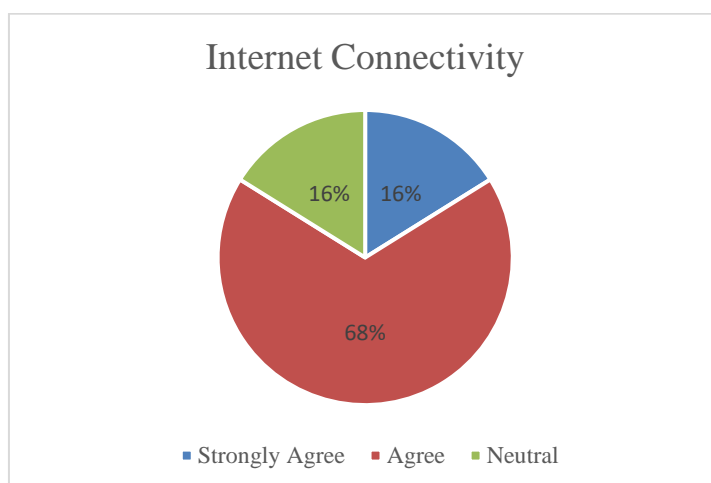


Figure 3. Internet Connectivity

Based on the results of the diagram above that the internet connectivity aspect, the teachers answered the questionnaire 68%. So it can be concluded that internet connectivity in online learning is very important and affects the continuity of online teaching and learning activities. Regarding internet connectivity, the teacher has also faced a bad connection, which as said by T(2):

I've had a bad internet connection, as an alternative if my students and I are doing a Google Meet and the network is disconnected, we move to google classroom and just do our homework. T(2)

From the interview, most of teachers and students have experienced poor internet connectivity. Most of the many students cannot access the internet because they come from rural areas, so internet connection is a challenge for them.

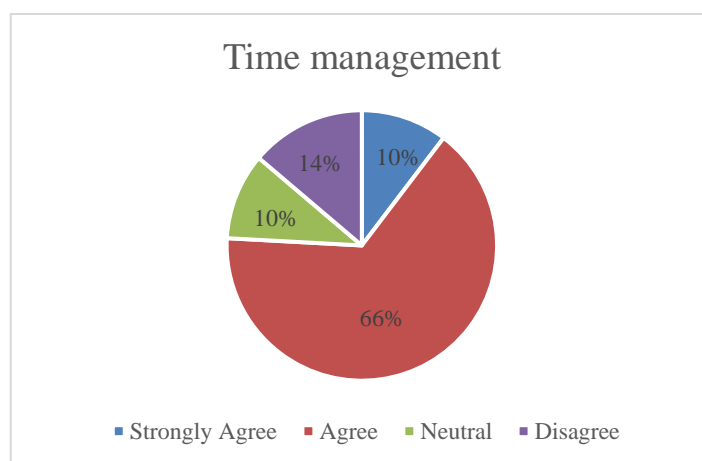


Figure 4. Time Management

Based on the results of the diagram above, the aspect-time management of the teachers answered the questionnaire 66%. So it can be concluded that time management is one of the obstacles for teachers and students when doing online learning, for example, such as student delays in collecting assignments given by teachers online due to time constraints. It was supported by the information gathered from the interview, T (1) said:

In terms of time management, I prefer face-to-face learning, especially if there is a need for students to be more effective, when given assignments, students are also more organized, and if face-to-face there is character building. T (1)

From the interview, in time management, teachers prefer face-to-face learning because it is more flexible, many students underestimate online learning. Ghafari and Emami (2011) reported that during online learning, the students may have problems with

self-discipline like procrastination and failure to fulfill requirements.

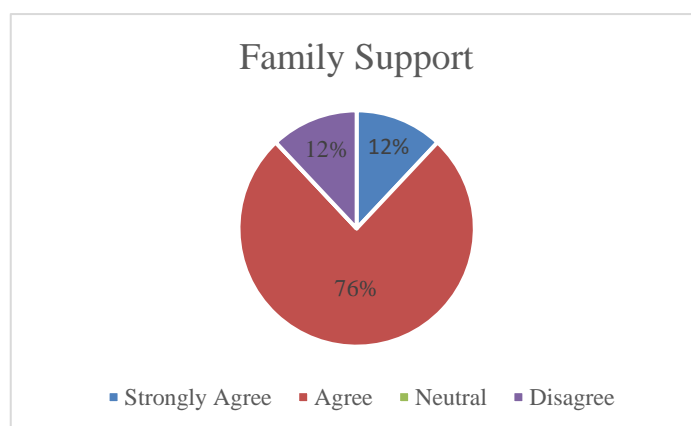


Figure 5. Family Support

Based on the results of the diagram above, the aspect-time management of the teachers answered the questionnaire 76%. So it can be concluded that family support is needed in online learning, so students can be motivated in carrying out teaching and learning activities at home. It was supported by the information gathered from the interview, T (5) said:

Very helpful, because the role of parents is not only as a motivator but also can be a teacher when students are at home, then students must also be supervised and controlled because often students do not do the assignments given by the teacher.
T (5)

Based on interviews that have been conducted, it is very necessary to get support from parents so that students can still do online learning. In terms of the students' academic life, parental support is found very important to ensure their smooth learning process (Arshard et al., 2016).

The results of the questionnaire and interviews show that despite the sudden urgent situation of the pandemic, teachers have to be able to adjust to the use of technology in online learning, and almost all of them (73%) are prepared for that. Schools support for facility and convenient condition are also important for the learning process, in addition to credit of the gadgets that the teachers use. However, more support (30%) is still needed for more maximum teaching learning process.

In addition, internet connectivity is considered a big challenge since 32% teachers still face this technical problem. It also creates another problem that time used is less efficient. When internet connectivity is unstable, more time are wasted for waiting as experienced by 44% teachers. At last, not only technical support is important, but also

psychological support for the students' environment that is their family as agreed by 76% teachers.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the first conclusion is about the challenges faced by English teachers in teaching online during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is concluded that during the Covid-19 pandemic, online learning is an alternative learning process so that education continues to run well, and temporarily replacing classroom-based learning is a good movement. Based on the teacher's answers at SMP 17 Tegal and SMP Ihsaniyah Tegal, there are only a few challenges faced by teachers, because after all, teachers must be ready in critical situations like this Covid-19 pandemic.

The second conclusion is about how they overcome the challenges. It is concluded that there are several things that teachers do in overcoming the challenges of online learning as examples of using Zoom, Gform, and other platforms. Some teachers feel constrained by using less familiar applications, so they use alternative applications that are familiar, such as WhatsApp. Various ways are done by teachers to be able to provide material during online learning. The facilities provided by the school are also adequate to support online learning. This study focuses on the teachers' perspective on the challenges they faced during online learning. Further study dealing with the impact of these teachers' experiences to the learning process is worth conducted.

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