

PROBLEMS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH ONLINE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Siti Wulandari*

Sofyan A. Gani

Asnawi Muslem

Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic has spread rapidly worldwide and influenced almost all sectors, including the education sector. The policy to study from home during the Covid-19 outbreak has caused a new problem in the teaching and learning. The objective of the research was to find out the problems faced by the English teachers in teaching English online during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research was approached qualitatively, and subjects are three English teachers teaching at one of senior high schools in Aceh, Indonesia. The data was gathered through observation and interviews with the three English teachers. The results show that some of the problems emerged during online learning, i.e. internet access, lack of familiarity with technology, difficulty in explaining the materials, problems in controlling and managing students' activities, indiscipline students, time-consuming process, low students' motivation, students absence in online class, and lack of parent support. The findings also show that there were two solutions to overcome the problems adopted by teachers, namely, using online chat with WhatsApp and keeping in touch with the students' parents to support the student activities and explain the lesson plans for online learning process.

Keywords: *online learning, pandemic covid-19, teaching problems, teaching strategies*

*Corresponding author, email: siti.wulandari65@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the world was shocked by the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which first appeared in Wuhan Province, China. Then quickly spread throughout the world, including Indonesia. In early March, Jakarta Province began to lock down some public access and advised the public to do social distancing to anticipate the spread of COVID-19. Globally, all activities have stopped, including workplaces, offices, and schools closed. COVID-19 also has an impact on the education system. All interactions turn into online classes due to the ongoing pandemic. As a result, in every line of education access changed to online learning as the right choice. The Ministry of Education and Culture set a policy to switch to online classes for the teaching and learning process. Navarro and Shoemaker (2000) state that students' online learning outcomes were much more satisfying than face-to-face learning regardless of the shortcomings. However, comparatively, each region is different and has its constraints regarding the online learning process.

The teacher and students are not directly in the classroom through the online learning process, but they can use technology to obtain information by using internet access. Feldman and Zucker (2002) explain that online teaching is one of the new perceptions through the internet. Both assume that online-based teaching includes communication anywhere and anytime. Therefore, by using an internet connection, it is hoped that the teaching and learning process can facilitate interaction between teachers and students.

Although profitable, online learning in Indonesia is still considered a breakthrough in the education system, especially in teaching and learning. Satrianingrum and Prasetyo (2020) describes information related to teacher perceptions and challenges to the implementation of online learning at home due to the impact of the COVID-19. The results of the study revealed that many deficiencies were found, among other lack of infrastructure, internet connection, internet quota loads, and limited control by teachers. The conclusion is that the system and process still pose problems in the implementation of virtual learning. Pratiwi (2020) states that based on the interviews, online learning can be carried out effectively at the Indonesian Christian University by utilizing several applications, such as WhatsApp chat, Zoom meeting, Google Classroom, Schoology, and Edmodo. However, the obstacles that occurred in its implementation

were mostly caused by internet connection problems. The case happened in a major urban area.

In rural areas, of course, online learning was a bit confusing for teachers and students alike because they needed much adjustment. Beiwinkler (2020) says that, in rural areas, particularly Eastern Indonesia, students and teachers are still lagging behind in access to education due to limited facilities and resources. He added that the local government needs to make the right policy regarding the serious situation and its relation to the limited facilities and resources. Lack of government attention makes online learning achievements low if they do not receive good services with teacher empowerment, simulations and good practices. The two cases above are inversely proportional to access to online teaching and learning that took place during the pandemic, regardless of the advantages and disadvantages. The Covid-19 prevents students and teachers in many schools from meeting face-to-face. In dealing with the teaching and learning process in this pandemic era, the use of media was an important part. The use of the internet and applications that support the teaching and learning process cannot be avoided. Unfortunately, many problems and limitations also arose in conducting online learning systems during the covid-19 outbreak. However, a lack of research on this area prevents us from understanding the nature of this problem. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out the problem faced by teachers in the teaching and learning process in English classes during the covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

COVID-19 Outbreaks

In late 2019, the Corona Viruses (Covid-19) pandemic took the world by surprise. Firstly, it appeared in Wuhan, China, and it affects different people in different ways. Most of the people will develop mild to moderate illnesses and recover without hospitalization. According to WHO (2020) most of the common symptoms are fever, dry cough, and tiredness and less common symptoms are aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell and a rash on the skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes.

In early March, Jakarta, Indonesia start to lockdown common places and persuades people to do social distancing in order to anticipate the spread of COVID-19. Globally, everything has stopped.

Workplaces, offices and schools are shut down. COVID-19 not only impacted human life activity but also impacted educational system with the principal of social distancing. All interaction that related to face to face classes was suspended to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Teaching Problems

Teachers who are teaching for the first time generally find some difficulties in interacting optimally. Hogan and Rabinowitz (2009) show that trainee teachers tend to experience critical challenges during the first year of teaching. Another problem is a teacher who is new to practice in teaching but has to deal directly with the concept of online classes. Some teachers are not ready for learning transactions without face to face. Anderson, Imdieke and Standerford (2011) stated that they saw one of the main challenges as the “disconnect between the way teachers were taught to teach”, and how the course content must be delivered in an effective online classroom. Another challenge outlined by Anderson et al. (2011) is that there is almost no institutional expectation for their online course. These also include the expectations of the teachers, students, and staff. Without clear guidelines and expectations to follow, there is no way to assess the effectiveness of these online learning.

Online Learning problems include unequal access to internet networks, inadequate devices, high internet data cost, unequal mastery of technology among educators or teachers, unpreparedness for implementing the teaching and learning process using distance learning methods, and difficulties for parents in supporting their children. The students who participate in teaching and learning activities online find many obstacles during the distance learning process.

Definition of E-Learning

Internet is a virtual English environment. Richard and Haya (2009) stated that the internet is one of the vital ways to make available resources for research and learning for both teachers and students to share and receive information. E-learning as a concept covers a range of applications, learning methods and processes (Rossi, 2009), enabled and empowered by digital technology (Abbad et al., 2009).

E-learning is the information and communication technologies in diverse processes of education. E-learning is considered as a revolutionary approach (Jennex, 2005), as centered for the learner and interactive system, repetitious, self-paced, and customizable (Twigg,

2002), and it is referred to the use of computer network through the internet (Welsh et al., 2003).

Teaching English Online

Nowadays, online learning is the most popular form of distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Windiarti et al. (2019) mentioned that the first e-learning programs were about information sharing without adequate interaction among the students. Accepting the material is not only in the classroom which was taught by teachers but also in an online class. The Internet offers material content that is easily accessible for teachers and students.

Teaching online seems to be practical, interesting and easy for an educator. However, some teachers, especially in remote areas, are not familiar with the technology. Nopilda and Kristiawan (2018) stated the demands of the world of education are increasingly modern and access must be affordable for all. The creation of "Industrial Revolution 4.0" or digital era is in line with the development of information technology, especially in developing countries. Feldman and Zucker (2002) explained that the online teaching and learning process is one of the new percepts of using the internet. They believed that the process should be taken place in online condition.

Teaching English through WhatsApp

WhatsApp platform is primarily a communication application, but it shares a number of features with social medial applications. It was created in 2009 in California and has now become popular with 1.5 billion users in 180 countries, which makes it the most used chat application together with Facebook messenger (Ngalomba, 2020). It allows smartphone users to quickly exchange texts and audio and video message for free and makes calls. WhatsApp is a supported application to accommodate online learning. Cetinkaya (2017) said that using WhatsApp is an effective way to create success in learning and developing of students' achievement. Meanwhile, Shodiq and Zainiyati (2020) stated that WhatsApp is a form of e-learning that is easily utilized by students in rural areas. Trisnani (2017) added that some people use WhatsApp as a medium of communication to share information. Students' parents in rural areas also have smartphones with the WhatsApp application installed, thus their children can attend the online class.

Teaching English through Google Classroom

E-learning system is the manifest of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that currently grows up rapidly in this modern era. Iftakhar (2016) stated that Google Classroom is effective and efficient teaching and learning system, for example, students can collect paperless assignments by utilizing features from Google Docs, Drive and other applications. Classroom learning opportunities spend a lot of time but insufficient with the administration even Google has brought a new resolution related to Google Classroom. The resolution has the potential to simplify communication between students with a single access point of discussion and assignments. The disadvantage of Google Classrooms as described by Iftakhar (2016) is that many teachers complained about insufficient internet speed. Some teachers prefer the Moodle application because it is free and open source. The students also indicated that they often had an email account problem when logging into the application.

Teaching English through Zoom Meeting

In a pandemic situation, we need to stay at home. Zoom technology helps us to keep connected with others. Haqien and Rahman (2020) defined Zoom Meeting as a live video learning medium. This application was created by Eric Yuan in 2011, based in San Jose, California. Zoom is a cloud-based service that offers meetings and webinars and also provides content sharing and video conferencing capability. It is a leader in modern enterprise video communication, with an easy to initiate collaboration and chat across mobile devices, desktops, telephones and room systems. In teaching and learning, especially English language classes, English teachers can bring their students together in a frictionless environment to get more done. Zoom allows English teachers to present the content of their lessons in various ways. The screen-sharing feature in Zoom can give English teachers a great opportunity to develop their students' intercultural skills by sharing material such as videos, articles, and presentations. During the lessons and after watching them, English teachers can encourage students to use active questioning to analyze and evaluate their learning.

The Constraints of Teaching English through Online Learning

Teaching English online in the pandemic era is not easy. It needs the support from parents, teachers and friends. The constraints that arise according to Setyawan (2020) when learning online are that teachers do not know how to create interesting online classroom situations. The impact for students is very significant; they are depressed during the activity. Teachers must be skilled in using online media and pay attention to appropriate concepts or learning methods. In other words, teachers must be adaptive to technological developments.

In addition, limited internet access definitely disturbs the teaching and learning process through online. Much effort and cost in creating online language learning run well. The stakeholder and schools have to ensure that both teachers and students have access to online technologies. According to Akhdar (2006), an obstacle of any physical or nonphysical barrier prevents the use of a computer in teaching. Teachers as educators, motivators and also facilitators must work hard twice to create teaching and learning English is running well. They feel challenging to apply it while they hope the learning process can run effectively.

Previous Research on Teaching English through Online Teaching Learning

Satrianingrum and Prasetyo (2020) conducted a study on teachers' perception toward the challenges of implementing online learning at home due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Early Childhood Education teachers in Padang, Indonesia. The result of the study reveals inadequate facilities and infrastructure, disturbing internet connection, internet quota purchase and the lack of flexibility of teachers in controlling student activities. Another study by Pratiwi (2020) sought the impact of COVID-19 on the online learning activities of Christian University in Indonesia through an interview. The results of the study showed that online learning at this university has been effective by utilizing the Zoom, Google Classroom, Schoology, and Edmodo applications. The problem experienced in implementing online learning is mostly internet connection problems.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Teaching English Online

Learning English using internet has become challenging and time consuming. There are some advantages and disadvantages of online learning. Mohammadi et al. (2011) mentioned that it is not only learner-

centred teaching process where the role of the teacher is a guide and facilitator in the teaching process, but it also fosters the interaction among students and teachers. Iftakhar (2016) concluded several advantages in online learning system, including easy to use, time efficient, cloud-based, flexible, free and mobile friendly.

A disadvantage according to Mohammadi et al. (2011) is that e-learning decreases social relations among learners where e-learning reduces not only the amount of face to face meetings but also the amount of teacher and student interaction. Setyawan (2020) stated that the challenge in teaching online is real. Internet access is difficult, and some students do not even have compatible smartphones because they come from less fortunate families.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Method

In this research, the researchers used qualitative research. According to Moleong (2000), qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or verbal words from people and observed behaviour. Sherman and Webb (2005) also stated that qualitative research is a discovery into a new concept, not only verification of ideas. Meanwhile, descriptive research is a form of research aimed to describe existing phenomena both natural phenomena and human engineering. The descriptive research method helps to provide an in-depth description of the problem.

Research Instruments

Observation sheet

In this study, observation was of the important techniques used in collecting the needed data related to the implementation of teaching and learning English online during Pandemic COVID-19 at SMAN 4 Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This instrument was used to get some information. The respondents were the teachers who taught English. Besides, another objective of this instrument was to describe the situation which occurred during online teaching and learning process.

Interview guide

The interview was used to add the information which could not be covered in the observation. It was used to support the detailed

description of the research. This instrument was designed in the form of semi-structured interview. It involved questions that covered all aspects of the teachers' behavior, experience, and believe related to speaking instruction, especially on how they prepared the teaching materials for online classes, how they taught online, and what methods and techniques they used.

Technique and Data Collection

Observation were used in qualitative research as a complement to the interview techniques that have been conducted. Observations in qualitative research were used to observe directly the object of research, so that the researcher could collect the data needed to answer research questions. Meanwhile, the researcher used unstructured observation, which is the observations made without using observation guidelines, so that researchers develop observations based on developments that occur in the field.

In this study, the researchers collected data by interviewing three English teachers. The researchers asked their opinions and their experiences about teaching and learning English through online mode during the COVID-19 outbreak. All interviewees were asked the same questions. The data collected through the interviews were recorded by using an audio recorder in a smartphone. Then, it was manually transcribed in order to facilitate data analyses.

Technique of Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was used in this research, which was adopted from qualitative data analysis techniques from Sugiono (2010), which included four steps, namely data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Related to the objectives of the study, in this section, the researchers describe the findings related to the challenges in teaching English online at SMAN 4 Banda Aceh and. In addition, the researcher also stated additional findings. The findings from the observation are written descriptively. The observation was conducted using the observation guide. Meanwhile, the interview is explained briefly. In

this section, the first teacher is coded as CWH, the second teacher is coded as IS, and the third teacher is coded as LD.

Teachers' problems

To know the online teaching and learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers used some observations to collect the data based on the observation checklist that had been made by the researcher.

Observation

The results of observations were in the form of activities, events, objects, certain conditions or circumstances, and a person's emotions. Observations were made to obtain a real picture of an event or incident to answer research questions. An observation table was made by the researchers to obtain data from participants. Data obtained from the field during the observation include obstacles or problems, that is the condition of the students' parents who were using WhatsApp too in their smartphones so often that their children could not use the phone for online learning. The second obstacle was the difficulty in finding internet signals, and a lack of smartphone devices because students' parents kept using them. The third obstacle was a signal difficulty. Based on the results of interviews, the teachers who used online learning stated that the online learning model was very suitable for students as learners. At the start of online learning, materials were only given through Microsoft Word for students to read, but the students felt bored after reading it for a certain period of time. When the teachers presented online learning through videos, students were very enthusiastic about participating in learning. When students were assigned to complete practice questions in the form of quizzes through Google Forms, they were very enthusiastic because they could see their correct answers immediately, and they could also see their score or results from their work. Zoom Meeting was only held occasionally because not all students could access it, especially those with signal difficulty.

Table 1. The result of teacher's observation

<i>No</i>	<i>The Sample</i>	<i>The result of Teacher's Observation</i>
1.	Participant 1 (Teacher X class CWH)	Based on the interview, it can be explained that the teacher used both Zoom meeting and WhatsApp group in teaching learning English. The teacher conducted

		teaching learning at home undisciplinable. She used time allocation in learning process very well even though, teaching online took a lot of time. She had problems with time management. The interaction between teacher and students was friendly because she was a very friendly person. Although it was an English class, the teacher communicated and explained the material in Indonesian. Occasionally, the teacher mixed her language by using English and Indonesian.
2	Participant 2 (Teacher XI class LD)	Based on the data, it can be explained that the teacher actively interacted with students in English. She mostly used English in interacting with her students and rarely spoke in Indonesian. Sometimes she was teaching very seriously, but she always got a good sense of humors in teaching and learning process. The teacher often used WhatsApp and Google classroom as supporting application in teaching and learning online.
3	Participant 3 (Teacher XII class IS)	Based on the data from the interview, the teacher was a kind and generous person. She rarely used English during teaching and learning process. She said that there were some difficulties in using English, for example in pronouncing English words. She had to repeat herself frequently in order to make it clear to her students. Therefore, the class became time-consuming during online teaching. The teacher used coursebooks to support her teaching and learning process. She used WhatsApp as a platform for the online class.

After the observation in teaching and learning process through online learning, the researchers found some problems faced by the teachers and students. During the online learning, internet connection was the primary problem. Limited access to internet especially in the remote area impacted online learning to a very high extent.

Interview

In this study, using an unstructured interview was proposed by Rachmawati (2007) who recommended starting from general questions. This type of interview is flexible and the researcher can follow the participants' interests and thoughts regarding the issues being explored. The results of the interviews with the teacher revealed the real

problems teachers faced in learning English online. To find out the problems, the researchers used the lead questions, as presented in the following table.

Table 2. The draft of the questions

<i>No</i>	<i>Questions</i>
1	Would you like to tell me the process of online teaching and learning English? Was it going well?
2	How did your students respond to the online learning process?
3	Were your students enthusiastic about online learning?
4	How did you provide the materials?
5	What were the techniques or strategies that you used in presenting the materials.
6	What kind of media did you use in teaching online?
7	Why did you use these media?
8	What were the problems that you faced when teaching online?
9	Could you please tell me how you overcame the problems?
10	How did you evaluate your students during online learning?

Discussions

Internet has been used as a tool to accommodate the teaching and learning process. In online classes, the internet access is an essential part in connecting people and ... interaction between teachers and students in education system. A lack of internet access impacted teaching learning through online learning. The COVID-19 outbreak has spread rapidly all over the world, affecting human life, including in education. In avoiding the spread of the COVID-19, the students were forbidden to come to school to join the class activities, but as a replacement the students had to study at home.

In dealing with the online teaching learning process, the use of media is also an assential part. In the utilization of the media, particulary in online classroom, the creativity and technology awareness of the teachers are needed. The teachers have to master the use of the internet and technology in order to support online teaching and learning. This is an important part because the teachers should deliver their messages, materials and assignment to their students. The use of internet and supported applications can contribute the teaching learning success, not only for the teacher but also for the students in interacting in the teaching and learning process. Based on the explanations above, the researchers found many difficulties faced by the teachers at SMAN 4 Banda Aceh in teaching online during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The obstacles experienced by the teachers include internet access. The communication between the teacher and the students required a good internet access in order that the process of teaching and learning happened as expected. Meanwhile, several teachers at SMAN 4 Banda Aceh had poor internet access. The teachers lived in areas not well covered by network signal, and they had problems with the internet data packages, so they could not access the internet. The first participant (P1), the second participant (P2), and the third participant (P3) said that the first problem was the internet access. According to them, internet access was the vital requirement in teaching and learning English during outbreak because it was the only way to make the communication between teacher and students. They said that some of their students could not easily get the materials and had problems in understanding materials delivered by the teachers because of a lack of internet access. It was also difficult for the students to submit their assignment to the teachers. The limitation in accessing internet also happened because they were from economically-disadvantaged family background. The students who were from this kind of families found difficulty in having such appropriate facilities as smartphone and internet package.

The second obstacles revealed from the data was problems in using technology. According to the interview with P1, she admired that she found some difficulties in accessing and utilizing technology in the beginning of online class because she never attended any training. Senior teachers struggled with e-learning technology. Another problem is difficulty in explaining materials. The online learning system made it difficult for teachers in explaining the materials, which was found as the third problem in online learning. P1 and P3 agreed that online learning system made it difficult for them to explain the materials to the students. P3 also said that while teaching online classes, she had to explain the materials several times in order to make sure that the students understood about it. Teachers complained about the way they had to explain the materials online, and they got frustrated in explaining them online. As a result, some of them only gave assignments to students in conducting online teaching.

The fourth problem was a lack of flexibility in controlling the students. According to the interview, P3 argued that she faced the problems related to managing the students. Online learning system created the limitation in online learning whereas the teachers could not control their students' activities during the teaching and learning

process. Managing students was also difficult if their parents did not pay attention or support their children in learning. Hence, the teachers tried to establish communication with parents as a strategy to provide information related to the learning plans, materials and media. Discipline problem in task submission was also a problem found in the data. This often happened in every daily online class. It cannot be denied that in online system where the internet access was an essential requirement in teachers and students interaction, limited internet access, the low signal, internet data cost, and a lack of flexibility of teachers in controlling the students' activities made them unable to collect the task on time.

Furthermore, online teaching and learning process was time consuming. According to the third participant (P3), in online teaching process, some plans could not run well. The teachers often struggled in organizing their students' activities. The problem further escalated because teachers had to manage the time properly. Teachers who teach online also need to spend more time in online learning process. In addition, another problem is that many students did not attend online classes. Based on the interview, P1 said that many students were absent in online class in the beginning of the study with online learning. It could happen because some students felt bored, sometimes they were lazy to study and had a lack of purpose in learning. Occasionally, some students were absent in the class without any notice. This impacted the teaching learning process. According to the condition above, the teachers had to handle many students doing remedial learning to repeat the materials and to give examination to students.

Another problems reported by the teachers was a lack of motivation. A lack of students' motivation made it difficult for the students to concentrate in learning process. P1 argued that most of students hardly followed the online class. They did not actively participate in online class even though they attended it. Therefore, the teachers needed to pay attention to the students' interest in learning. They needed to motivate them to pay attention to the materials being taught. Finally, lack of parents' support is the other problems that we found in the data. Based on the interview, all of the participants agreed that the problem in implementing e-learning in online class was caused by a lack of parent support. The parent was the controller for the students in their study at home. They played an important role in supporting the implementation of online learning. Some of teachers recognized that they got less support from the student parents. If

parents did not provide full support for their children's learning, the students were not serious in attending classes or doing assignments.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion above, the researchers can draw some conclusions about the teachers problems in teaching and learning English online at SMAN 4 Banda Aceh. First, the strategy for online teaching that most often used by teachers was using online chat, and WhatsApp was the most popular tool for this purpose. Another strategies used by the teachers was establishing the communication and collaboration with the student parents in order to give more explanations related to the lesson plans while studying from home during the pandemic.

In addition, some problems also emerged during the teaching and learning online. Internet access was found as the first problem in the online teaching and learning. The next problem was the teacher's unfamiliarity with technology. Then, the difficulties were experienced in explaining the materials to the students. A lack of flexibility in controlling student activities at home made students undisciplined. Then, another problem was that teaching online was time consuming. Students were also found to have a lack of motivation. Therefore, many students were absent during the online class. Finally, parent support was also not adequate.

Related to the conclusion above, the researchers shall make some suggestions. There is a need for teacher and student skills training related to the use of technology. This aims to increase knowledge and integrate technological advances in education properly. In addition, there is a need for special treatment for students with learning difficulties because not all students were skillful in using technology. The online learning model was very good to use because it trains students to be honest and independent in doing tasks without supervision. The role of parents at home is expected to be as intense as possible in supervising their children to study at home.

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