EFL Teachers' Online Teaching in Rural Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stories from Indonesia

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Abstract
The implementation of online English instruction in remote areas during the COVID-19 pandemic, which mandates school closures, remains unknown, especially given these areas' reputation for inadequate educational facilities. Additionally, the preparations, implementation, and challenges experienced by English as a Foreign Language (henceforth, EFL) teachers in rural areas remain unclear. This study therefore aimed at exploring the experiences of EFL teachers in rural areas on (1) their readiness for conducting online teaching, (2) their implementation of online teaching, and (3) the challenges during the implementation of online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research was conducted in Indonesia with eight English teachers in rural schools. This study was a qualitative study that employed a phenomenological study approach and used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The findings indicate that EFL teachers, during this pandemic time, were able to conduct fully online English teaching because they possessed sufficient knowledge of English instruction using technology. Additionally, these teachers might leverage various technologies and adapt those tools to transform their usual face-to-face English instruction into online instruction. Nonetheless, these teachers in rural schools frequently encountered challenges with internet connectivity, student-owned technology devices, student enthusiasm, and student netiquette when enrolling in online English

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teaching. Additionally, this article discusses some practical considerations for implementing online English teaching during a pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19, distance learning, online teaching, teaching, TELL, rural areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the aspect of English teaching and learning (Yi & Jang, 2020) and students' lives in different ways as these students might not be able to finish their studies in the usual way (Daniel, 2020). In response to this pandemic, 107 countries had been reported to close their public schools by March 2020 (Viner et al., 2020) and 188 countries in total by early April 2020 (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Such schools have been closed to further limit the transmission of COVID-19 to students (Gerber & Leong, 2021; Murphy, 2020).

The closure of these schools resulted in the implementation of teaching during the pandemic, and several countries agreed to suspend face-to-face instruction in favor of online instruction (Daniel, 2020; Ockey, 2021). However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the abrupt shifts from offline classroom instruction to full-fledged online learning are relatively new for our students and teachers. Not all students and teachers in all schools are capable of adequately implementing online learning. For instance, even though nine English teachers in London had used online learning, they encountered various challenges, including internet connectivity, delivering appropriate English evaluations, and delivering adequate explanations via videos (see Evans et al., 2020). The preceding examples demonstrate that difficulties in online English instruction are inevitable during this pandemic. Large countries and towns are constantly confronted with many challenges while transitioning from traditional offline classroom training to abrupt online classroom learning. Even the English teachers in London, a large metropolis, continue to have difficulties, and comparable difficulties may exist in other regions, even rural ones.

Very little is known about how teachers in rural schools conduct online English teaching during this pandemic. A study conducted by Dube (2020) has shed some light that rural schools during this pandemic time are facing some challenges, such as unavailability of internet connection, shortage of devices to support online learning, closure of internet cafes, and lack of computer skills for teaching. However, additional research is needed to better understand how online English teaching is carried out in rural areas during this pandemic, particularly regarding EFL teachers' preparation, implementation, and obstacles. It is critical to learn about the experiences of EFL teachers as they prepare to transition from traditional to online teaching. Such narratives are required to provide a complete picture of how online teaching is implemented in rural areas. Thus, in-depth investigations are essential to offer us current information about how online English teaching is handled during this pandemic, particularly online English teaching in rural areas, which are notorious for their lack of educational infrastructure (Febriana et al., 2018).

This research, therefore, conducted a phenomenological study to collect teachers' stories teaching in rural schools by interviewing eight EFL teachers of secondary education in rural areas. Therefore, this research aimed to explore the EFL

teachers' readiness to conduct distance learning with technology, the implementation of their English language teaching in rural areas, and the challenges they face during online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study posed the following questions to guide the inquiry:

1. How was the English as a foreign language teachers' readiness before COVID-19-induced online teaching in rural areas?
2. How did English as foreign language teachers conduct online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas?
3. What challenges did English as a foreign language teachers face during online English teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Teaching in Rural Areas

Rural areas are well-known for their lack of socioeconomic amenities such as decent education, adequate health care, adequate transportation, marketing facilities, and even electricity (Dube, 2020). Moreover, regarding English education, rural areas have minimal funds to hold such education in their districts. For instance, Hansen-Thomas et al. (2016) assert that rural areas have limited funds to cover the costs of teaching materials and other demands such as full-time English teachers. As a result, teaching in rural areas is renowned for its lack of quality (Febriana et al., 2018).

Preparing teachers to teach in rural schools has been a concern for many countries (Kizilaslan, 2012). However, providing professional development programs for teachers in rural areas could be an onerous task (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016). In addition, families in rural areas sometimes do not support their children with sufficient literacy activities and support at home (Omidire et al., 2018). Therefore, teaching in rural areas that are well known for their lack of education facilities (Febriana et al., 2018) might be challenging for some teachers.

Some recent studies have reported the challenges of teaching in rural areas. For example, Kizilaslan (2012) investigated the attitudes of 115 senior student instructors in an English language teaching department in Turkey. Most respondents thought teaching in rural areas would present unique problems, including unfamiliarity with pupils' cultural backgrounds, restricted access to resources, a lack of prior teaching experience, transportation, and accommodation. Thus, these preconceived notions may dissuade teachers from teaching in rural areas even before they are assigned.

Hansen-Thomas et al. (2016) surveyed 117 instructors from 13 rural Texas school districts. Hansen-Thomas reported that these teachers face a few challenges, including the following: students in rural areas lack academic vocabulary in English, they are hesitant to ask questions about their learning which creates communication problems with their English teachers, and English teachers have a limited amount of time to prepare courses, teach, and do other academic activities. As a result, these challenges impacted the quality of English education in rural areas.

In another instance, Omidire et al. (2018) researched South African rural schools. They observed three teachers in three classrooms at two rural schools and concluded that language instruction did not promote students' learning even though these three teachers claimed to have had enough curriculum training. Additionally,

they reported that students' literacy abilities might be the underlying cause of all issues encountered during teaching and learning. Many families in South Africa were impoverished and unable to support their children's literacy development to support English learning. These examples demonstrate how English teaching in rural areas faces numerous challenges from the viewpoint of both teachers and students. Additionally, little is known about how online English instruction is conducted in rural schools during this pandemic, especially in Indonesia with many rural areas.

2.2   Teaching English with Technology during the COVID-19 pandemic

Several initiatives have been made to establish efficient online English teaching throughout this pandemic period. Online education is typically classified into three modes: synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid (Perveen, 2016). According to Gorjian and Payman (2014), synchronous mode requires real-time communication via chatting or live video conferencing applications. In contrast, the asynchronous mode allows students and teachers to connect via offline applications in a delayed form. Furthermore, synchronous mode ensures that all students have an equal opportunity to be directed by the teacher and stay on track throughout their learning (Digiovanni & Nagaswami, 2001). Thus, the synchronous mode can create real-time interactive interactions as an alternative to face-to-face learning in the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, Evans et al. (2020) discussed their experiences teaching English in London and using Google Meet and Google Classroom to provide their students with synchronous mode. Even though Evans et al. (2020) were not prepared to adopt online English teaching, they did their best by frequently explaining materials and activities via Google Meet, despite several students expressing confusion the following day. The students were then instructed to photograph their assignments and upload them to Google Classroom.

Another example, Moorhouse and Beaumont (2020) discussed their experiences in creating an online English course for a Hongkong-based English teacher using video conferencing technologies, such as Zoom, to give live lessons after dissatisfaction with the previous asynchronous format. Moorhouse and Beaumont created a three-stage lesson that included an offline pre-live-lesson task, an online live-lesson, and a post-live-lesson task (on a learning management system). Additionally, the English teacher used Mentimeter or Kahoot as an assessment and gameplay to supplement the activities.

However, not all individuals are able to participate in virtual communication due to infrastructure constraints such as a lack of technical tools, internet connections, bandwidth, and internet restrictions. As a result, asynchronous learning may be the ideal option for conducting emergency online learning during this pandemic period (Daniel, 2020; Murphy, 2020). According to Daniel (2020), students and teachers have flexibility in conducting online learning through asynchronous mode. Teachers can prepare their materials, post the materials, and check the students' works at their convenient time, while students can arrange their time to deal with home and study demands. For instance, Yi and Jang (2020) reported that two English teachers in a rural area of South Korea prepared pre-recorded video courses for asynchronous mode, which appeared to benefit the students' distant learning experience.

2.3 The Challenges of Online English Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Several studies have reported the challenges faced by English teachers when conducting online English teaching, both in urban and rural areas. For instance, Evans et al. (2020) discussed their experiences as English language teachers in London. They claimed they were not prepared to teach English online and even questioned whether their lessons were successful. Additionally, they discovered that students had very few interactions with other students during the online learning process.

Another example, according to Sayer and Braun (2020), not all urban districts in the United States possess the necessary infrastructure to conduct online English learning. Additionally, this pandemic afflicted many families in the United States, including immigrants. As a result, they observed that instructors needed to reach out to kids and families to ensure access to remote learning technology. Additionally, they noted that students were required to master new online learning methods using smartphones and other technologies.

Ferdiansyah et al. (2020) reported that students encountered many challenges when using online literature circles to teach English online in an Indonesian school. At the start of the courses, students had connectivity issues. Additionally, students struggled to communicate effectively and on time when discussing the topic with their peers in group projects. Some students even did not activate their phones for the whole day, while others frequently encountered issues with the internet connection or mobile phone signal.

Yi and Jang (2020) described a situation in which two English teachers in a rural area of South Korea struggled to create video lessons for their students. One teacher was a native English speaker who understood the material but could not create videos; the other was a Korean who could create video lectures but struggled with the material. Fortunately, they collaborated to develop pre-recorded video tutorials for their students.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological approach to describe the common meaning of several individuals' lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding. The phenomenon observed in this study was English language teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required teachers to conduct distance learning through online platforms. Meanwhile, the lived experiences observed in this study were the EFL teachers' experiences when conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Context, Participants, and Researcher

This study was conducted in the central region of Indonesia, primarily in rural areas. In terms of education, Indonesian rural communities lack qualified teachers and access to teaching and learning resources (Febriana et al., 2018). Therefore, this

study's main purpose was to better understand English teachers' readiness to conduct distance learning with technology and implement their English language teaching in rural areas, including the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To meet the above purpose, the researcher approached a superintendent who knew EFL teachers teaching English in rural areas secondary schools in the middle part of Indonesia. The researcher was then connected to an EFL teacher who happened to be the first participant in this study. The rest of the participants were then invited using a snowball sampling technique. The participants in this study had to meet some criteria to be able to participate, such as (1) teaching English in rural areas, (2) teaching English in a secondary school, and (3) implementing online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. At first, the researcher was connected to 13 EFL teachers. However, two of them were not implementing online teaching due to the unavailability of facilities, especially internet and computer devices. In addition, three teachers had moved and no longer taught in rural areas. Thus, the primary participants in this study were eight EFL teachers (three females and five males) teaching in rural areas secondary schools in the middle part of Indonesia (see Table 1). The researcher then sent a consent letter explaining the study, including the risks and benefits of joining the study. All agreed to participate in this study and were coded to preserve their information confidentiality.

Table 1. The participants' demographic information.

Participants	Gender	Schools' level of teaching	Online classes taught	Years of teaching experiences
Teacher 1	Female	Vocational high school	6 classes	2 years
Teacher 2	Female	Senior high school	10 classes	11 years
Teacher 3	Female	Vocational high school	6 classes	9 years
Teacher 4	Male	Vocational high school	5 classes	9 years
Teacher 5	Male	Senior high school	12 classes	9 years
Teacher 6	Male	Junior high school	3 classes	6 years
Teacher 7	Male	Junior high school	6 classes	8 years
Teacher 8	Male	Junior high school	3 classes	1 year

3.3   Data Collection and Analysis

This study's data were collected through in-depth individual interviews through phone calls since some areas implemented a Stay-at-Home order, which requires all Indonesians to stay at home. The type of interview conducted was a semi-structured interview to enable flexibility in exploring the participants' experiences. The researcher developed the interview guide based on the information gathered from the literature review about teaching in rural areas and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, all questions covered whether the participants had sufficient knowledge to teach English using technology, how they implemented the online instruction, and what challenges they faced during the online teaching. Moreover, the interview guide used in this study contained four parts of questions such as (1) participants' demographic information, (2) participants' readiness in conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, (3) the implementation of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (4) the challenges when conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each participant was individually interviewed twice, 40-60 minutes/session, over two months. The interviews were

conducted in Indonesian to reduce anxiety and increase the chance of getting more profound data as the participants would find it easier to describe their thoughts in their mother tongue (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). The secondary data collected in this study were the artifacts showing the training/webinars attended by the teachers, implementation of online learning, challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which were reported during interviews. These secondary data served as a triangulation method used in this study to confirm the participants' testimonies.

The interviews were recorded using a mobile phone recorder application. The transcriptions were sent to all participants for validation and to ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the data (Utami & Prestridge, 2018). This study used the data analysis spiral strategy in which the researcher enters with audio materials and exits with an account of stories or narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) mentioned that this strategy consists of six phases such as (1) managing and organizing the data, (2) reading and memoing the emergent ideas, (3) describing and classifying codes into themes, (4) developing and assessing interpretations, (5) representing and visualizing the data, and (6) account of findings. The researcher began by transcribing the interviews and organizing all data in folders for easy management. The researcher then proceeded to the second phase by reading all the transcripts obtained from the interviews, memos, and artifacts. He generated codes and relevant topics in the third phase and then made some interpretations in the fourth phase. The researcher began composing narratives of the participants' stories and selecting acceptable passages to support them in phase five. Finally, this article was written to disseminate the study's findings.

The themes in this study were categorized prior to conducting the analysis, such as (1) participants' readiness in conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) the implementation of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, and (3) the challenges faced when conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. When emerging the themes, the researcher employed thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) through reading all codes from the transcripts. In addition, an in vivo coding analysis technique was employed to support the analysis by classifying the participants' exact words to the three themes mentioned above. Furthermore, the bracketing method was also implemented by writing memos during interviews and analysis (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The memos were used to examine and reflect upon the researcher's engagement with the data.

4. RESULTS

The findings were summarized, and the participants' experiences were highlighted to address the research questions, analyzed, and narratively described. The analysis resulted in three themes, 11 categories, 12 sub-categories, and 67 codes (see Table 2). Because the space is limited, not all experiences are presented in every theme.

4.1 The Readiness of Teaching English Using Technology

The summarized results from the first theme, the readiness of teaching English using technology, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The summary of the data analysis from the first theme.

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories	Sample excerpts
The readiness of teaching English using technology	Gaining knowledge of teaching with technology from autodidactic learning		"I know how to teach using technology because I learned this knowledge when I was working at my previous school."
	Gaining knowledge of teaching with technology from seminars/workshops		"The government and private institutions often gave seminars and workshops before and during the pandemic, and I often joined in."
	Gaining knowledge of teaching with technology from TPACK-related programs		"I gained my knowledge of teaching with technology from my lecturers when I was a pre-service teacher."
	Knowing how to teach with technology		"I use WhatsApp because my students knew how to use it."

The readiness of teaching using technology is vital for successful technology integration. Thus, having Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (henceforth, TPACK), a knowledge of teaching content using technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2005, 2009), is necessary for all teachers, including those teaching in rural areas. In general, all participants gained TPACK through joining TPACK-related programs or autodidactic learning. However, the interview results suggested that all teachers had different experiences of gaining TPACK. For example, two participants joined the TPACK-related programs. In contrast, the rest only joined formal technology seminars and workshops or learned it autodidactically since they did not attend TPACK-related programs or their TEPs (Teacher Education Programs) did not provide them with such a framework at that time. Teacher 6's and Teacher 8's interview results are the best examples of how teachers in rural areas obtained their TPACK.

4.1.1 Teacher 6

Teacher 6 has been teaching English in rural areas for six years and recently had the opportunity to spend a year teaching English in a remote area of eastern Indonesia. Throughout the epidemic, he taught three online sessions at a junior high school, with each session consisting of 22-29 pupils. Although the government ordered all teachers to conduct online instruction, he was not hesitant to deliver it because he had sufficient knowledge and teaching expertise using technology:

(1)   "I know how to teach using technology because I learned this knowledge when working at my previous school. This school, even though in a rural area, required me to teach using technology. So, I am well-prepared for online teaching during the pandemic".

Later, when he was working at his old school, he learned how to use Schoology, Quipper, Google Classroom, and many other tools to teach English from two seminars. However, Teacher 6 never learned how to use technology when he was a pre-service teacher. He said:

(2) "When I was a pre-service teacher, I did not get any knowledge of teaching with technology because the technology was not as advanced as today and was rarely implemented in teaching".

Therefore, although Teacher 6 was familiar with Learning Management System (henceforth, LMS) and quiz maker applications, he did not use them in his online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, he used Ms. Words, Ms. PowerPoint, and WhatsApp solely. Interestingly, he noted how beneficial WhatsApp was during the pandemic. He said:

(3) "I use WhatsApp because my students knew how to use it…I often use voice messages to explain a topic or to give confirmations on pronunciations of some words to my students".

4.1.2 Teacher 8

Teacher 8 was an inexperienced instructor with little classroom experience. He was blessed in that he was hired as an in-service teacher immediately following his graduation. He was then transferred to teach on a small island recognized for its educational deficiencies. Teacher 8 conducted three online lessons throughout the epidemic, with each class consisting of between 27 and 35 pupils. Teacher 8 was prepared to teach online because he claimed to have extensive experience teaching utilizing technology prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Indonesia. Unlike Teacher 6, Teacher 8 learned about technology-enhanced education while he was a pre-service teacher:

(4) "I gained my knowledge of teaching using technology from my lecturers when I was a pre-service teacher. They implemented various technology tools when teaching. For example, I learned how to upload materials, hold discussions, and give feedback using Schoology".

He also noted that by viewing YouTube and participating in webinars hosted by various private universities, he increased his expertise in teaching using technology. To support his online teaching, he implemented some technology tools such as smartphones, laptops and used some applications such as Ms. Word and Ms. PPT, and an LMS developed by the local education authority. However, he added WhatsApp as an alternative as he said:

(5) "The LMS provided by the local government was not so interactive as it did not have a discussion forum or a chat feature. I, therefore, used WhatsApp as an alternative to the communication issue".

4.2   The Implementation of Online Teaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The summarized results from the second theme, the implementation of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, are presented in Table 3.

When the Indonesian Ministry of Education mandated that all teachers and professors conduct distance education via online learning, traditional face-to-face classrooms were transformed overnight into online classrooms. The interview findings indicated that some participants implemented LMS. However, a few of them used WhatsApp in replacement of LMS. These are best described through the experiences of Teacher 7, Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3.

Table 3. The summary of the data analysis from the second theme.

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories	Sample excerpts
The implementation of online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic	Teaching listening with technology	Materials delivery	"I did not use an LMS platform as it is a new thing for the students, and I have to create a tutorial for them if I use an LMS."
		Assessments	"I gave a multiple-choice test using Google Form to assess my students since it is effortless to score."
	Teaching speaking with technology	Materials delivery	"I uploaded the speaking materials via Google Classroom as I used this LMS platform in my classes."
		Assessments	"I asked my students to record their voices talking about a topic and uploaded them on WhatsApp."
	Teaching reading with technology	Materials delivery	"I employed Google Classroom and WhatsApp during my teaching, especially for sending the texts for my students."
		Assessments	"I often gave multiple-choice tests after the students read the texts."
	Teaching writing with technology	Materials delivery	"I rarely used offline texts from the student's textbooks …."
		Assessments	"I asked my students to write one or two paragraphs only. Sometimes, I asked them to write a short essay."

4.2.1 Teacher 7

Teacher 7 has been teaching in rural areas for about eight years and has been transferred to three rural schools. During the epidemic, he taught six classes at the new school, with 30-37 children crammed into one classroom. However, Teacher 7 felt optimistic before conducting online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic because he and the students had already participated in blended learning.

He searched for and adapted audio recordings online to match the students' levels when teaching listening skills. In addition, Teacher 7 seemed to employ simple technologies to convey the listening materials and instructions for various reasons. For example, he made use of WhatsApp:

(6)   "I did not use an LMS platform as it is a new thing for the students, and I have to create a tutorial for them if I use an LMS. There is no time to learn a new application during this pandemic time. WhatsApp will be straightforward to use because the students are familiar with this application".

Moreover, due to conducting online learning, Teacher 7 would standby for a couple of hours after delivering the materials and instructions if some students asked questions. When giving the assessments to the students, Teacher 7 tended to implement traditional assessments rather than authentic ones, which are time-consuming. In addition, he often used Google Form as a means of assessments:

(7) "I gave a multiple-choice test using Google Form to assess my students since it is effortless to score. Furthermore, during this pandemic, I spent more hours doing online teaching than the time I spent in traditional teaching since I had to standby for hours during my teaching schedule, and I had many classes with many students to teach. Therefore, implementing this technique (multiple-choice) is the best option I have".

4.2.2 Teacher 1

Teacher 1 was a novice teacher who had been hired as an in-service teacher one year after graduating. Thus, she had barely two years of teaching experience. She stated, however, that she possessed appropriate technological expertise obtained from her college and the seminars she attended prior to the pandemic. Teacher 1 taught six classes throughout the pandemic, each with 32-36 pupils.

She frequently encountered challenges with internet speed or connections while teaching speaking skills. These challenges frequently occurred because of the students' geo-locations, which were not supported by a strong internet signal, as most of them lived in areas with limited internet availability. As a result, she used another application with low bandwidth as a substitute as she reported:

(8) "I uploaded the speaking materials via Google Classroom as I used this LMS platform in my classes. Nevertheless, if the students could not open Google Classroom, I also uploaded the materials via WhatsApp".

However, she appeared to use WhatsApp more than Google Classroom during the teaching speaking process. She recorded her voice or, on occasion, videotaped herself explaining the materials to the pupils and sent them via WhatsApp. As with other teachers' experiences, she would then be available for a couple of hours following the upload of the materials in case students contacted her via WhatsApp.

For the assessments, she typed the instructions asking the students to record their voices or sometimes create videos talking about the COVID-19 pandemic or the students' activities during the pandemic. Somehow, the students did not respond immediately to the assignment as some of them submitted the assignments beyond the deadlines set by Teacher 1 and made her stressful:

(9) "Could you imagine? Some of my students did not respond to the assignment immediately. Even one student said she did not know I posted the assignment on WhatsApp. Some of them also did not submit the assignments on time as they said that they were sick, had low internet connectivity, and have tried so many times to upload the assignments".

4.2.3 Teacher 2

Teacher 2 has eleven years of teaching experience, having spent the first six years of her career teaching in urban areas before being sent as an in-service teacher to teach in a rural school. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she was teaching ten classes with between 31 and 36 pupils per class. Teacher 2 possessed appropriate knowledge of technology-assisted instruction, which she acquired from training and webinars she attended before and during the pandemic.

She was utilizing Google Classroom, Google Forms, and WhatsApp to teach reading skills. Teacher 2 frequently distributed reading materials in a variety of formats. For example, she sent texts to the students to read, and if the students were

unable to access the internet, she would copy and paste the texts into a pdf document and send them to the students. Teacher 2 would capture screenshots of the texts if the kids did not have a pdf reader application. She occasionally encouraged students to see a video with an English subtitle in lieu of reading a text. However, when Teacher 2 uploaded the materials, she would wait for hours to receive responses from her students:

(10) "I would stay for hours to wait for my students' responses after uploading the materials. I sometimes sent messages to my students to remind them that I had already uploaded the materials. I also reminded the students in the WhatsApp group to discuss the materials via Google Classroom if they forgot of doing so".

When giving the assessment, Teacher 2 would give multiple-choice tests more than asking the students to write their responses after reading the texts because of the teaching loads she had during the pandemic as she confessed:

(11) "I often gave multiple-choice tests after the students read the texts. I used this assessment technique because it was easy to score, and I was teaching ten classes. However, sometimes, I also asked the students to write their responses in Google Form after reading the texts".

4.2.4 Teacher 3

Teacher 3 used to be an elementary school teacher for eight years before being assigned as an in-service teacher to teach vocational high school and spent a year at this school. She had sufficient knowledge of teaching with technology, as she claimed. Moreover, she was ready to do online teaching during this pandemic.

Teacher 3 implemented an LMS platform suggested by the Indonesian ministry of education, Google Form, and WhatsApp in teaching writing skills. Regarding writing materials, she often gave the students online text materials via LMS or WhatsApp:

(12) "I often gave online materials from my teaching reading as examples for the students for their writings. However, I rarely used offline texts from the student's textbooks because, in this school, one textbook is used by two students, and during this pandemic, they are not allowed to meet their classmates".

Sometimes, she would also record audio or videos explaining the writing materials if they did not understand the written instructions. Then, she would standby for hours in WhatsApp in case the students had questions for her:

(13) "I would standby for hours in my schedule of teaching. Then, when the students did not understand the instructions, I would record my voice or even videos of me explaining the materials in mixed languages of Indonesian and English, so the students understood what they had to do".

She was concerned about the assignments that were not too heavy for the students and her as she had six classes to teach. Accordingly, she often asked the students to submit one or two paragraphs or short essays:

(14) "I asked my students to write one or two paragraphs only. Sometimes, I asked them to write a short essay. I did this because I had many teaching loads during this pandemic. Also, I do not want to burden my students with difficult assignments and learning loads during this pandemic".

4.3   The Challenges while Conducting Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The summarized results from the third theme, the challenges while conducting online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The summary of the data analysis from the third theme.

Themes	Categories	Sub-categories	Sample excerpts
The challenges while conducting online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic	Lack of technology tools		"Do you know? Some of my students do not have smartphones or laptops."
	Caused by technology tools	Connectivity	"My students' problem is the internet connection…."
		Bandwidth	"Sometimes, I need to wait for hours to upload materials with big sizes."
	Caused by students	Students' attitude	"Some of my students were very lazy during this pandemic. Some of them said they were sick."
		learning engagement	"Could you imagine? Some of my students did not respond to the assignment immediately."

Conducting a new form of learning will inevitably create new issues. For example, when conducting online learning during the pandemic, all teachers confessed that they had the same challenges. In general, those challenges are lack of technology tools, internet connectivity, bandwidth, students' attitudes, and learning engagements. These are best described through the experiences of Teacher 4 and Teacher 5.

4.3.1 Teacher 4

Teacher 4 has been teaching English for nine years. He started his career teaching at a suburban school for six years, and then he moved to teach at a school in a rural area. Teacher 4 was teaching five classes, with 29-32 students enrolled in each class. Teacher 4 had sufficient knowledge of technology, which involves using low and high-tech for teaching English.

When conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, he majorly faced some issues on internet connectivity as other teachers in rural areas did. As he described, most of the students lived in areas surrounded by hills, and this geo-location resulted in low internet connectivity. He said:

(15) "Most of my students live in areas surrounded by hills and have no internet connectivity. Therefore, they have to go to different areas with good internet signal only to join the online learning during this pandemic".

Some of the students also did not have technology devices, such as smartphones and internet quota, to join the online learning. Even there was a family who had only one smartphone used by two siblings. In this situation, as similar as to what other teachers in rural areas did, Teacher 4 made worksheets for those who did not have any technology devices:

(16) "Do you know? Some of my students do not have smartphones or laptops. So, I had to create worksheets for them and asked them to pick the worksheets up and submit them at school. This is the only way for the students during this pandemic time to keep joining in distance learning".

Another challenge for Teacher 4 was the students' netiquette. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the students had many excuses for not joining the online learning as he reported:

(17) "Some of my students were very lazy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of them said they were sick. Interestingly, one of them said he had to help his parents to farm."

Moreover, Teacher 4 did not know what to do with this situation as the government ordered all teachers not to force the students during this COVID-19 pandemic in conducting online learning.

4.3.2 Teacher 5

Teacher 5 has been teaching English for nine years at a school in a rural area. He was teaching twelve classes in which 35-37 students enrolled one class. Teacher 5 had a great interest in technology, and he has been learning technology for years, including technology for teaching.

Teacher 5 often made audiovisual materials and sent them to the students. However, Teacher 5 often had internet connectivity issues when he uploaded those materials to his students' WhatsApp group as he stated:

(18) "I use the internet connection from my smartphone for teaching purposes. Unlike modem, my internet connection is rather bad, and it took a long time when I uploaded materials with big sizes to WhatsApp group".

Like other teachers, he also faced challenges with the students' netiquette and motivation in learning during this pandemic. His students had many reasons for not joining the classes:

(19) "…I had a student who said that he did not have an internet quota to join the online learning. At the same time, I saw he posted his photos on Facebook, hanging around with his friends. My students were not this bad before the pandemic".

5. DISCUSSION

In response to the first research question, which concerned participants' preparation to conduct online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, the data indicated that all EFL teachers possessed adequate knowledge of technology-based instruction. Also, it seems that the participants had turned their Pedagogical Content Knowledge from their studies as pre-service teachers into TPACK through joining seminars/webinars or through autodidactic learning. TPACK itself is pivotal for teachers to create useful instructions with technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Moreover, these findings also confirmed Drajati et al.'s (2018) findings that Indonesian teachers who taught English had good TPACK knowledge. On the other hand, these findings also confronted Febriana et al.'s (2018) claim that teachers in rural

areas often lack quality. Additionally, the data indicate that these participants were prepared to teach online during the COVID-19 pandemic since they had well-prepared materials and technology tools.

Interestingly, the participants seem to have some considerations when selecting technology devices to be used in their classrooms. Perhaps, their TPACK guided these considerations. For instance, when teachers selected technology tools to teach, they examined whether their students possessed the tools and would have problems using them. Thus, even though these EFL teachers were teaching in rural areas, they could conduct online instruction throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings addressing the second research question on online teaching implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that participants could convert face-to-face meetings to online learning. Throughout online training, all participants used a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning techniques. It appears that the participants' use of technology enabled them to deliver adequate online learning for their pupils. As research indicates, technology has a beneficial effect on teachers' teaching (Wong & Hsu, 2009), especially enhancing the success of English language teaching practices (Li et al., 2019). Interestingly, the new forms of teaching made the participants spend more hours teaching as their students had slow responses. Thus, teaching many online classes during the pandemic would be challenging and exhausting for these EFL teachers.

An interesting finding shows that participants implemented WhatsApp to meet their teaching management purposes. While some participants used LMS to handle teaching materials, instructions, and evaluations of students, it seems that LMS did not always serve well. Participants mostly replaced the LMS platforms due to the students' limited internet quota during online learning with WhatsApp, which typically requires low internet bandwidth to perform. As Hockly (2014) claimed, one of the factors affecting technology integration is access to resources. Participants in this study seemed to think a lot about the students' access to resources and led some participants to replace their LMS with WhatsApp. In addition, some of the participants seem to implement WhatsApp to have both synchronous and asynchronous online learning modes, making their online teaching easier in terms of implementing technology to both teaching and managing learning.

Findings addressing the third research question indicate that most of the difficulties participants faced in conducting online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic were internet access, student-owned technology devices, and students' affective domain following online learning such as motivation and netiquette. It is a fact that learning facilities in Indonesia are poor, particularly in rural areas. Therefore, Internet access and shortage of technology tools are becoming essential issues to help education in rural Indonesia. These results support Febriana et al. (2018), who reported that Indonesian rural areas lacked adequate facilities to support learning. If the lack of such facilities persists, Indonesian education will face significant challenges as the government begins studying from home.

Moreover, it seems that Indonesian students are not used to online learning because they had issues with their affective domains like netiquette and learning motivation. Motivation is central to language learning performance and failure (Dörnyei, 2001). If students lack motivation when joining online learning, it can be predicted that they will also have problems with attitudes when joining online learning. Even though the teachers set the learning contract, the absence of the classroom

situation and the live teaching environment could affect the students' feeling that they were not doing their daily class learning. Interestingly, the Indonesian Ministry of Education instructed all teachers to disregard the students' attitudes and performances during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ministry argued that forcing students to study and punish them could increase their stress levels and reduce their immune system.

Three implications can be drawn from the above discussion, most notably for EFL teachers who will do online learning due to school closures due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The first implication is that due to the COVID-19 epidemic, all EFL teachers must use TPACK when teaching online, as TPACK is the knowledge required for digital teachers to develop successful teaching using technology (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The second point is that educational institutions should conduct several webinars, including the Ministry of Education, to provide teachers with technological knowledge to turn their Pedagogical Content Knowledge into TPACK as Hockly (2014) argued that practical technology training would shape the positive incorporation of technology into teaching. The third point is that teachers and students should have ample facilities and access to these internet and technology devices during the COVID-19 pandemic for effective online learning. Several studies have reported (e.g. Buabeng-Andoh, 2012; Hockly, 2014; Kusuma, 2021; Lawrence & Tar, 2018) that the two fundamental factors influencing the progress of technology adoption in education are technology resources and accessibility.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the data presented above, it can be concluded that rural EFL teachers were prepared to do online teaching during the COVID-19 epidemic because they had an adequate understanding of educational technology. Teachers might transform their normal face-to-face meetings into online activities, requiring them to spend more time than they did previously. Additionally, while teaching English, EFL teachers frequently experienced challenges such as internet access, student-owned technology tools, student motivation, and student netiquette.

However, there are two major drawbacks to this research. The first limitation is that it did not include EFL teachers from other rural areas all over Indonesia, which would have provided additional data to provide a more accurate picture of how online learning is handled in rural locations. The second limitation is the students' absence to discuss specific issues related to their motivation and netiquette during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopefully, this study will inspire other researchers to do similar studies with larger sample sizes and various data methods to solve some of the limitations highlighted in this paper.

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