AN INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS' CHALLENGES ON THE ASPECTS OF CHALLENGES IN ONLINE LEARNING

Cahayu Sari; Atikah Wati*; Nasori Efendi
Wiralodra University. Jl. Ir. H Juanda KM. 03, Indramayu, Jawa Barat, 45213, Indonesia
cahayusari02@gmail.com; atikah_wati@unwir.ad.id; nasoriefendi@unwir.ac.id
*Corresponding Author

Abstract: The unexpected shift in English language teaching from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning activities using digital platforms has resulted in several challenges for English teachers and students. These challenges include five aspects: online learning platform, designing materials, internet connection, motivating students, and professional development. Three English teachers participated in this research grounded on a qualitative approach with a case study design. The data was collected through a questionnaire and interview adapted from Dambhare (2020) and Korkmaz & Toraman (2020). The results revealed that operating the E-Learning platform, designing, delivering, and developing the material for online learning, and lack of motivation to students and engagement become the primary challenges of online teaching amidst the global pandemic. Additionally, the participants stated that they encountered problems with an unstable internet connection and the need for professional development programs about ICT integration. The result also shows that the teachers were unfamiliar with the mandatory application for teaching. They still need a guide to learn the application. The impact of this situation is that the teachers should improve themselves to learn more about the technology and find their teaching solutions.

Keywords: *teachers' challenges, online learning, the aspects of challenges*

INTRODUCTION

The change from face-to-face to online learning causes new challenges in teaching online by almost all teachers in high school, especially for the English subject. Teaching online depends on the internet connection that connects students and teachers. This online teaching helps our educational aspect in this current pandemic. Many online media platforms can be used to teach online purposes, such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Google Classroom, and Schoology. However, many problems are found related to devices or internet connection; even the teachers still do not get used to these devices. Teaching online in this current situation hopefully can succeed the educational purposes in Indonesia.

Technology development is forcing teachers to follow internet lifestyles more closely, one of which is using an online learning model, especially in teaching English as

71

a foreign language. Moore et al. (2011) stated that Online learning is learning that uses the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring out different learning interactions. The online learning model allows students to learn completely online while still socializing with classmates.

Previous research on teacher challenges in online learning during the covid-19 pandemic has been carried out. Cholis (2020) found out that poor internet access experienced by students is a significant problem. The next one is from Alam (2020), who found out that the sources of challenges were: no prior experience of getting online education and, thus, unfamiliarity with the environment and requirements, limited internet, technical issues (e.g., using a computer or smartphone), time management and feedback management. The last previous research from Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) showed that teachers face different challenges, including a lack of appropriate materials, students' lack of attention and demotivation towards online classes, and a lack of funding and support for language institutions. Despite those researches that investigated teachers' challenges in online learning, very few studies investigated Islamic Senior High School teachers' challenges in online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. With this background, the present study investigates the teachers' challenges in online learning, including five aspects of online learning platforms, designing materials, internet connection, motivating students, and professional development. By knowing the teachers' challenges in online learning, it can be used by other teachers to consider these challenges as the pre-analysis to prepare the aspects needed in teaching online. Because of that, the research question is, 'How are the teachers' challenges in Online Learning based on the five aspects of challenges in online learning?'

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aspects of Challenges in Online Learning

The unexpected shift in English language teaching from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning activities using digital platforms has resulted in several challenges for English teachers and students as stated by Nugroho, Ilmiani, & Rekha (2020), there are five aspects of teachers' challenges in online teaching English as follow as below:

a. Online learning platform

According to Moore et al. (2011), online learning is learning that uses the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring out different learning interactions. In the context of technology, the e-learning platform has become one of the crucial accelerators. However, this crucial accelerator is not ready yet. The absence of a representative e-learning platform impedes teaching and learning activities. the teachers slightly have adequate knowledge and skills in technology integration to design online teaching since they performed traditional classroom interaction before the global pandemic. It can be concluded that an online learning platform is an interactive online service that provides a community of teachers and students with information tools and resources to support the delivery and management

of teaching and learning activities; these platforms include e-learning platforms provided by the school, WhatsApp Group, etc.

b. Designing materials

Designing materials for online learning that differ from traditional classrooms has become a challenge teachers face. Preparing materials for online learning consumes much time (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). The EFL teachers should be aware of designing interactive, simple, and appropriate material to improve students' abilities. Nevertheless, teachers tend to give their students assignments that must be submitted by a deadline. Soon, it becomes another significant challenge to check students' tasks daily, and give scores and feedback is hard for the teachers (Sun et al., 2020).

c. Internet connection, internet access, and network connection

Internet connection, internet access, and network connection become the primary needs for online teaching and learning; unstable internet connection and limited quota invite another challenge. The internet connection problem hit student-teacher engagement in delivering materials. Additionally, financial condition generates students' problems in participating in online learning. They could only afford a limited internet quota that was not sufficient to join the online learning activities comfortably. Lucena & Leal (2020) stated that students have difficulty paying for high-cost internet access.

d. Students' motivation and engagement

Students' motivation and engagement in online learning activities seemed to be a severe problem that should be solved. It happens regularly and continuously. The students tend to skip the teachers' instruction that has been written longer, resulting in not maximal students' scores. Furthermore, Malathy (2019) confirms that a lack of student-teacher engagement and responsive feedback from the teacher can decrease the students' motivation. Although online learning improves the students' language skills, it still needs teachers' presence.

e. Professional developments

Professional developments and training, sudden online learning policy caused by a global pandemic gives a different result with English learning beyond the classroom to language students' proficiency in a structured and well-planned learning environment such as what has been conducted by some researchers (Cole, 2016; Jensen, 2017; Drajati, 2019). This condition needs professional development and training. Previous studies in this field draw that digital devices offer EFL learners' various possibilities for improving students' language skills and can be integrated into a language classroom. The tools such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Youtube are successfully proven as media to enhance language students' proficiency. Most importantly, teacher professional development programs such as training and workshops are still needed to enhance the efficiency of online learning.

METHOD

This research belongs to a qualitative study with a case study design. The instruments of the study used questionnaires and interviews adopted from Dambhare (2020) and Korkmaz & Toraman (2020). The questionnaire was used to investigate the teachers' challenges in online learning, and the interview was used to clarify the teachers' answers to the questionnaire; it was recorded through audio recording. The questionnaire consists of 22 statements with four different choices, strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Three statements focused on other online learning platforms, seven statements focused on designing the material, three statements focused on the internet connection, five statements focused on motivating students, and four statements about professional development.

Three experienced English teachers who conducted online learning voluntarily were involved in this study. They have good experience teaching English face-to-face classes as a foreign language ranging from 5 to 10 years, and the teacher has received a certified professional teacher. These teachers were selected from Man 1 Indramayu. Man 1 Indramayu has an E-Learning platform to teach online. It indicated that teachers must utilize technology in teaching. This condition is why teachers in MAN 1 Indramayu were chosen as participants.

The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using the procedure adopted by Sari (2016). The first step to process the data is the writer reading all of the questionnaire answers and then classifying the same answer for each statement. Second, after all the answers are classified, the answers are calculated into a percentage. Then, the results are put on the table and discussed based on their categories. Meanwhile, the data from the interview were analyzed using Miles & Hubberman (1994), using three concurrent flows, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Teachers' Challenges in Online Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic

a. Online learning platform

The online learning platform has become a crucial accelerator contributing to learning goals. The data about the teachers' challenges in online learning platforms are presented below:

Table 1. Teachers' challenges in online learning

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
I find a suitable online learning platform for my students	100%	0%	0%	0%
I feel unfamiliar with the media I use for online learning	0%	66.6%	33.3%	0%
The school provides an online learning platform for teaching the online learning process	100%	0%	0%	0%

The findings above clearly show that teachers still have challenges in teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers still have challenges teaching online classrooms using online learning platforms, especially E-Learning. Most teachers are unfamiliar with the first operation of the application in the online classroom, and some

others still have difficulty with it. This condition makes teachers have to look for other applications that can help them in online learning, an application that is suitable for teachers in online learning is WhatsApp which can help them in the teaching and learning process. It is supported by Asmara (2020), who stated that WhatsApp is a platform that fits the students' and teachers' needs in virtual classroom learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the school had provided E-Learning, some participants felt it more convenient to use WhatsApp as an online learning platform. The following are the supporting data from the interview related to the questionnaire finding.

Table 2. Interview data on teachers' challenges in online learning

Participants	Interview data
1	*Teachers must use the E-Learning platform provided by our institution during online learning, but I had to try to find available digital platforms that could help me do my classes. I use WhatsApp as an online learning platform*
3	*The online platform that is suitable for me is WhatsApp application because my students prefer to use WhatsApp*

b. Designing materials

Dudley-Evans (1998) reiterates that materials play a crucial role in exposing learners to the language. The information about the teachers' challenges in designing materials consists of 7 statements presented in the table below:

Table 3. Teachers' Challenges in Designing Materials

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
I have challenges in designing suitable materials for my students	0%	100%	0%	0%
I have challenges in creating easy and effective materials that are in accordance with the subject I teach	0%	66.6%	33.3%	0%
I have challenges in making appropriate material so that it is easy for my students to understand through online learning	66.6%	33.3%	0%	0%
I have challenges in explaining the material in online learning	66.6%	33.3%	0%	0%
I have challenges in giving instructions and responding to queries through online learning platforms	33.3%	66.6%	0%	0%
I have challenges in giving feedback to my students	33.3%	66.6%	0%	0%
I don't have enough time to check and evaluate my students' assignments	0%	100%	0%	0%

Table 3. shows that participants had challenges designing easy and effective material for online learning. Most participants stated that they should prepare more time to design the suitable material they will teach to the students. Sometimes Learning through the applications makes the class ineffective to run. There was very little interaction between teachers and students in discussing the material and little time to deliver the material. This situation makes it the teachers challenging to convey the material, so the material given is not precise and optimal. Therefore, teachers should be more creative in developing their teaching methods in their online classrooms, as we know that the regular classroom in offline learning is very different from the online classroom. The teachers cannot see and control their students directly. So, those are the challenges for the teacher in teaching through the application in an online classroom. Supported by Alam (2020) stated that the quality of learning during the school from the Home period. The teacher should be able to use a limited amount of time, which

automatically affects the speed and assessment of learning. Khatoony (2020) also revealed that teachers have difficulties creating materials that suit the students' needs and are easy to learn via online learning. That is why teachers should provide another method to support their teaching in the online classroom. When the students are bored during class, it is difficult for the teachers to control the class well, just as the teachers answer in the interview.

Table 4. Interview data on Teachers' Challenges in Designing Materials

Participants	Interview data
1	*I have faced many challenges in designing suitable materials for my students. This is not an easy task, and it takes up my time. When learning online, many things must be considered so that students can understand the material. I have to repeatedly give my student the same explanation or information during the learning process. They often fail to understand my instructions, for example, when I give projects or assignments*
3	*Many things need to be considered, which makes me have to sort out what materials suit students. Moreover, with circumstances like this, it is very difficult to make effective materials so that students understand the material, students can understand what they are writing, and students can understand the content of the video that I gave*
2	*I think the challenge encountered during online learning is explaining the material because there is little time. I find students who do not pay attention to the instructions or assignments given*

c. Internet connection

Online learning is entirely dependent on access to the internet network. Internet connection, internet access, and network connection become the primary needs for teaching and learning online. The information about the teachers' challenges with an internet connection is presented in the table below:

Table 5. Teachers' Challenges in Internet Connection

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
I have challenges in having stable internet access intended for online learning	0%	100%	0%	0%
Upload/download learning material in my home area is in poor condition	66.6%	33.3%	0%	0%
The cost of an internet bundle is too high	0%	66.6%	33.3%	0%

All the teachers in this school were facilitated with internet access (Wi-Fi) at the school. However, Due to the pandemic, they were not allowed to go to school too often. Thus, there was a shift. When they had to deliver the material from school, they did not find any problem with the internet access. The main obstacle here was the internet speed.

On the contrary, if they were at home, some had internet access problems, such as bad internet signal/network and blackout. It was explained that an important consideration for the introduction of online learning is the internet network because the smoothness of the internet network is essential for the smoothness of the teaching and learning stage in online learning. Arora (2019) supports that if the teachers do not have ready access to a computer and internet connection, the online learning process cannot achieve its objectives because hardware, software, and connectivity facilities are the prerequisites that enable online teaching and learning.

Table 6. Interview Data on Teachers' Challenges in Internet Connection

Participants	Interview data
1	*I have been disturbed by the internet connection because, in my home area, the internet connection is not stable enough. When the lights go out, I can't do online classes. Even though the school has provided Wifi for teachers, we often experience internet connection problems.*
2 and 3	*Usually, the signal disappears, and blackouts at school. I used the Wifi provided, but I wasn't the only one who used other teachers too, which makes the internet connection not good enough.*

d. Motivating students

Motivation is an essential aspect of language learning. Ortilia (2015) argued that students would be more highly motivated to learn about themes and texts related to their study or work areas. In online learning, the teacher must find a way so that students want to participate in learning. That is why students always need to be motivated. The information about the teachers' challenges in motivating students is presented in the table below:

Table 7. Teacher's Challenges in Motivating students

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
In online learning, interaction with students is very less	100%	0%	0%	0%
In online learning, teachers cannot give special attention to students	0%	66.6%	33.3%	0%
In online learning, motivating and engaging students is difficult	33.3%	66.6%	0%	0%
Maintaining discipline is very tough in online learning	100%	0%	0%	0%
It is difficult to assemble all the students for the class	100%	0%	0%	0%

Most teachers realize that teaching through applications sometimes makes students feel bored. Preparing many tools for learning, finding the teaching method, and creating the material sometimes makes the teachers tired and burdened. On the other side, teachers should always control the learning process of their students in an online classroom. It is a challenge for teachers because they should constantly monitor their students. Each student has a different motivation for learning the material. So, the teachers should keep on the students to be motivated to learn. During the online classroom, the teacher should ensure that all students are ready to join the class. However, it is not easy for the teachers because the motivation was not given directly to the students but through typing it in WAG or in the comment which the teachers cannot be sure that the students read the motivation word given by the teachers, which shown in the table of the interview below.

Table 8. Interview Data on Teachers' Challenges in Motivating students

Participants	Interview data
1	*In my opinion, my students lack motivation and engagement during online classes*
2	*In my opinion, motivating students during online learning is not difficult but not easy. I will provide motivation usually before the class starts or after the class is held*
3	*The challenge is that we often give motivation via WhatsApp. If E-Learning students are lazy to read, the motivation given by the teacher*

e. Professional development

The brief transitioning period from regular to remote teaching created urgency for the professionalization of teachers in terms of digitalization. The information about

the teachers' challenges related to professional development is presented in the table below:

Table 9. Teachers' Challenges in Professional Development

Challenges	SA	A	D	SD
Adapting to new technology took time	0%	66.6%	33.3%	0%
I have challenges with the use of phones, laptops, tablets, or any devices for online learning	0%	0%	0 %	100%
I always face obstacles when I use online learning platforms because of my knowledge limitations	33.3%	66.6%	0%	0%
I feel less confident when I use an online learning platform	0%	33.3%	66.6%	0%

The teachers have challenges in operating online learning platforms. They do not have sufficient knowledge in the field of technology, and they are no longer young, which makes teachers often forget how to operate the learning platform. It is supported by Raja and Nagasubramani (2018) emphasize that teachers' responses toward computers are the main factor in the successful implementation of ICT in learning and teaching. Therefore, teachers must develop skills in using a wide range of teaching media. In this case, the teachers feel they need some kind of training or seminar related to online learning.

Table 10. Data Interview on Teachers' Challenges in Professional Development

Participants	Interview data
1	*Another challenge is that my current age is not easy anymore, making it easy for me to forget something.*
2	*Maybe the problem is that I am not young anymore because I may not be used to the digital era. I have tried using the Google Classroom application, but I often have problems when using it*
3	*At the beginning of using the online learning platform, I felt less confident in using E-Learning because I was not very familiar with technology, but over time, the one year switch to online learning could be resolved well*

CONCLUSION

Teachers still have challenges teaching online classrooms using online learning platforms, especially E-Learning. Most of the teachers are unfamiliar with and face difficulties with the application. This makes teachers seek other applications that can help them in online learning and an application that is suitable for teachers in online learning is WhatsApp. In designing materials, teachers stated they need more time to design suitable materials for the students. Related to internet connection challenges, it hits student-teacher engagement in delivering materials, the teachers experienced a power outage which made the connection unstable, etc. The lack of students' motivation and engagement to join the online learning activities made the students often fail to understand the instructions. In the end, the teachers must repeatedly provide the same explanation or information. The need for professional development programs for ICT integration became the challenge encountered by teachers as they were not young teachers anymore. The that difficult to remember things and teachers are not equipped with adequate skills and knowledge about digital platforms to conduct online teaching; this makes them less prepared to carry out learning online.

REFERENCES

Alam, M. A. (2020). *Challenges and possibilities of online education during COVID-19*. Preprints 2020, 2020060013

Asmara, R. (2020). Teaching English in a Virtual Classroom Using Whatsapp During Covid-19 Pandemic. In Language and Education Journal (Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 16–27).

Cholis, S. (2020). Challenges on teaching online English subject in smk negeri 1 nawangan. Research paper. Muhammadiyah university of Surakarta.

Cole, J., & Vanderplank, R. (2016). Comparing autonomous and class-based learners in Brazil: Evidence for the present-day advantages of informal, out-of-class learning. System, 61, 31–42.

Dambhare, A., & Khan, S. K. (2020). An Analysis of Teachers Perceptions Towards Online Learning In India During Covid Pandemic. Research Scholar, CT University, Ludhiana, Punjab.

Dudley-Evans, T. (1998). Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach. Cambridge University Press.

Gjelaj, M., Buza, K., Shatri, K., & Zabeli, N. (2020). Digital technologies in early childhood: Attitudes and practices of parents and teachers in Kosovo. International Journal of Instruction, 13(1), 165–184.

Jensen, S. H. (2017). Gaming as an English language learning resource among young Children in Denmark. Calico Journal, 34(1).

Khatoony, S., & Nezhadmehr, M. (2020). EFL teachers' challenges in integration of technology for online classrooms during Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Iran. AJELP: Asian Journal of English Language and Pedagogy, 8, 1-16. https://doi.org/10.37134/ajelp.vol8.sp.1.2020

Korkmaz, G., & Toraman, Ç. (2020). Are we ready for the post-COVID-19 educational practice? An investigation into what educators think as to online learning. International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES), 4(4), 293-309.

Lai, C., Zhu, W., & Gong, G. (2015). Understanding the quality of out-of-class English learning. TESOL Quarterly, 49(2), 278–308.

Lucena, J. M. V. M., & Leal, D. A. (2020). Education, Teaching and Technology and the Amazonian Identities. Revista de Estudos e Pesquisas Sobre Ensino Tecnológico (EDUCITEC), 13(1), 1-14.

Malathy. (2019). Teaching Language through Technology. Kongunadu Research Journal, 1, 4–5.

Nugroho, A., Ilmiani, D., & Rekha, A. (2020) EFL Teachers' Challenges and Insights of Online Teaching amidst Global Pandemic. Journal of English language literature and teaching, Vol.4, No.3, PP 277-291.

Nugroho, A., & Mutiaraningrum, I. (2020). EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about digital learning of English. 5(2), 304–321.

Otilia, S. M. (2015). Needs analysis in English for specific purposes. Constantin Brancusi University of Targu-Jiu, 1 (2), 54-55

Raja, R., & Nagasubramani, P. C. (2018). Impact of modern technology in education. Journal of Applied and Advanced Research, 3(1), 33-35.

Sari, R. A. (2016). Students' Perceptions on the Video Project in Their Speaking Class: A Case Study of 11th Grade of SMAN 1 Kasihan. Sanata Dharma University. Yogyakarta. (Thesis).

Sun, X., Zou, J., Li, L., & Luo, M. (2020). A blockchain-based online language learning system. Telecommunication Systems.