

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TEACHERS IN PANDEMIC COVID 19 AT SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 61 MEDAN

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Abstract: *This research is aimed to investigate the challenges faced by the teachers in Pandemic COVID 19 in SMP Muhammadiyah 61 Medan. This research was conducted by applying descriptive qualitative method and having the data collection through observation and interview by online. Then the subject of this research was 5 English teachers. The data was analysed by having the step starting with data reduction, data presentation, data verification and drawing conclusion. The finding reveals that the most dominant challenges faced the teacher in online teaching and learning was the lack of the students' knowledge in using the learning application used by the teachers. They were still not getting used yet in this strategy because their mindset in learning was still face-to-face and they were still dependent on their teachers. Another most dominant challenge was the students' limitation of having smartphone and internet quota. These challenges are in need of solution so that the students can learn effectively through this pandemic.*

Keywords: *Challenges, Teachers, Pandemic, Covid 19*

Introduction

Language learning cannot be separated with various problems including the linguistic problems and skill to speak the language itself (Izar, 2017). In line with (Nasution et al., 2020) states that in language learning there are four skill aspects need to be mastered such as speaking, reading, writing and listening understanding. Listening is a process to understanding what is going to listen to and determine the information needed in accordance with the purpose of listening itself. Therefore, to be a good listener, the one should mastering the listening skills itself. (I. D. Manurung, 2020). Then pronunciation is also one important thing that must be mastered by the students who studies English. Good Pronunciation makes students' English speaking skills becomes better (Yusriati & Hasibuan, 2019). And other aspect should be considered is that It is essential for students to have argument skills (Hasibuan & Manurung, 2020). In Indonesia studying English as foreign language is fundamental for the necessity presented in this globalized world since science and technology are the world culture and the means to acquire and keep up with the development of science and technology (Y. Manurung & Izar, 2019)

The year 2020 is giving great impact in all aspects around the world caused by the attack of Covid 19 pandemic. The emergence of this virus changes every aspect of human life. This condition requires citizens to stay at home, work, worship and study at home (Jamaluddin et al., 2020, p. 2). It becomes one of tragic event that it is never imagined by human being previously. Education is surely affected and challenged to have reformation in teaching way. As it is known that Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic or plague has struck more than 200 countries in the world and has given its own challenges for educational institutions, especially higher education. Anticipating the transmission of the virus, the government has issued various policies, from isolation, social and physical distancing to Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) (Hamid et al., 2020).

In addition, distance education has become a powerful strategy for making higher education available for more people, regardless their economic and social conditions (Ortega-maldonado et al., 2017). Virtual learning is also applied in Islamic school especially in SMP Muhammadiyah 61 Medan. In fact, online learning is something new for educators and learners and absolutely they all still learn to adapt in practice. Consequently, challenges are appearing and this study is aimed to investigate the challenges faced by the teachers in Pandemic COVID 19.

Literature Review

Online Learning

Before Covid 19 pandemic spreads in all around the world, learning in the classroom is mostly conducted in the education field especially in the level of junior high school. All learning activities by listening, reading, writing and doing other activities are designed by the instructor. And the students can meet the teacher or instructor gathering with them in the classroom. Face-to-face learning is assumed as more effective and efficient in learning while online learning is still not familiar activity. However, because of Covid 19 pandemic, learning online is only appropriate way to conduct. In accordance with government recommendations through the Ministry of Education and Culture related to the Covid-19 emergency was stated in the letter Number 2 year of 2020 concerning Prevention and Treatment at Ministry of Education and Culture environment and the letter number 3 year of 2020 concerning Covid-19 prevention in the education unit. "The government encourages teachers not to complete all the material in the curriculum. The most important is students still get involved in relevant learning such as skills life, health, and empathy. " So, in this pandemic, learning must be the goal is still carried out so that the teaching and learning process continues although not completing all the material contained in the curriculum. In short, whether it is ready or not, all education institution should obey the government rule.

Online learning or e-learning is defined as a form of information technology applied in the field of education in the form of cyberspace. In this course the students attend the class by visiting the class pages. They complete assignments according to the class schedule. They can also communicate with the instructor and classmates using e-mail and online discussion forums. This class format is very flexible for busy schedules. Students can often log on to the course at any time of the day (or night). Computer skills and determination are necessary to be successful. Students need keyboarding skills and must be able to write so that others can understand. With this internet network technology will help us find information about what we want to get telecommunications and information, for example internet, CD-ROOM. (Molinda, 2005).

The Strength and Weaknesses of Online Learning

All educators should approach and apply online learning caused by Covid 19 pandemic whether they like or not and even whether the students are ready or not in virtual classroom. This learning has two sides in practice. The strengths of this virtual class are:

- (1) The virtual classroom allows the students to participate in high quality learning situations when the social distance should be kept. They can participate in classes from anywhere in the world as long as the computer and internet connection are provided.
- (2) The learning is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week or in other words this virtual learning is having time efficiency or it can be conducted any time. It also allows the professional juggling work, family, and study schedules to participate in class discussions. There is no question about doing the work; just do it at the times that are more convenient. Students can access their courses at any time of day or night. Further, they have continuous access to lectures, course materials, and class discussions. This is particularly convenient for those who may need to reread a lecture or take more time to reflect on some material before moving on.
- (3) It is students-centered. Within an online discussion, the individual student responds to the course material (lectures and course books, for example) and to comments from other students. Students usually respond to those topics within the broader conversation that most clearly speak to their individual concerns. These situations result in smaller conversations taking place simultaneously within the group.
- (4) It gets easier to get access to resources. As it is known that along Covid 19 pandemic the students are not allowed to study at school even go to library. By having online learning. The students and teachers can compile a resource section online with links to scholarly articles, institutions, and other materials relevant to the course topic for students to access for research, extension, or in-depth analysis of course content material.
- (5) Virtual learning triggers the teachers to be creative in order to support the use of interactive learning environments as contributing to self-direction and critical thinking

While online programs have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education, there are also weaknesses inherent in the use of this medium. They are:

- (1) The lack of knowledge and skills in the technology, computer literacy by the students is the main problems faced in conducting the virtual learning.
- (2) The lack of access, whether it be for economic or logistic reasons, will exclude otherwise eligible students from the course. This is a significant issue in rural and lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods.
- (3) The limitation technology and access of internet connection in remote area will block the online learning. This virtual learning is not suitable in this area indeed.
- (4) This learning is only effective for the independent, mature, self-disciplined student students while it fails and it is inappropriate for dependent students who get used mainly for the assistance of the instructors.
- (5) Administrators and/or faculty members who are uncomfortable with change and working with technology, or feel that online programs cannot offer quality education,

often inhibit the process of implementation. These people represent a considerable weakness in an online program because they can inhibit its success.

Media Applied in Online Learning

One of the challenges faculty face is how to design online or blended courses (Alammary, Sheard, & Carbone, 2014; Branoff & Wiebe, 2009). Educators decide deliberately upon learning activities and the integration of media—physical devices used “for acquiring, storing, transporting or stated that displaying messages” (Saettler, 2004, p. 456) —to enable students achieve educational objectives.

(Amaka & Goeman, 2017) states that the cumulative findings indicate that ten particular media attributes are of paramount importance for effective learning in OBL courses: interactivity, navigability, (a)synchronicity, flexibility, media richness, ease of use, individualization, mobility, proximity and responsiveness.

(Korucu & Atun, 2016) propose that social media improves teaching and learning process. As it can be applied in virtual teaching-learning process some social media are possible to conduct such as WhatsApp Application from WA group consisting educators and learners, YouTube the application where the learners can have it as the learning source and share their assignment, Facebook and other social media.

Other media applied in online learning are zoom application, google meet, google classroom, skype application and others. The various media are available and they suit based on the learning goals and internet connection is as a vital need because they are all totally able to be operated by the internet connection.

However, in terms of assessment, if it refers to the 2013 Curriculum, it is very likely to be problematic because of the difficulty of conducting authentic assessments that refer to assessment standards, which consist of (1) attitude competency assessment through observation, self-assessment, peer assessment by students and journals, (2) knowledge through written tests, oral tests, and assignments, and (3) skills through performance appraisal, namely assessments that require students to demonstrate certain competencies using practice tests, products, projects, and portfolio (Maryati et al., 2019, p. 130).

Method

The qualitative approach was applied in this study in July 2020. The subject of this research was 5 English teachers who taught 8 grade teachers in SMP Muhammadiyah 61 Medan. The researcher herself is as one of the facilitators of TANOTO Foundation. As it is known as this foundation has the collaboration with Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of University of Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara in teachers’ training and this school is one of partner schools in Medan. Data collection was carried out through online observation and interviews by zoom. The data was analysed by having the step starting with data reduction, data presentation, data verification and drawing conclusion (Sugiyono, 2010)

Result and Discussion

The results of this research were divided into two parts namely observation and interview results. Those results were described below'

Observation Results

The researcher indirectly conducted the online observations and via phone calls. This observation made referred to teachers' assistance in distributing the questionnaire to the students. So that in this case the teachers got participated in assessing student observations. The observation result was shown below:

Table 1: Observation Result

No	The Aspect to be Observed	Score					Category
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.	The students follow the online learning		√				
2.	They listen carefully when the teacher teaches	√					
3.	They are always present in online learning		√				
4.	They look enthusiasm during learning		√				
5.	They do the assignment ontime	√					
6.	They understand the way to join online learning	√					
7.	They are interested in online learning	√					
8.	They feel motivated during online learning	√					
9.	They are happy and fun in online learning		√				
10.	They like online learning more than face-to-face learning	√					
Total		60%	40%				

Score Criteria: 1 = poor 2 = moderate 3 = good 4 = very good

Based on the table above, it was seen that 60% was categorized as poor and 40% was categorized as moderate. From the score it revealed that students dominantly were not ready to have online learning.

Interview Result

The interview session was applied through zoom application both of researcher and teachers. The topic to be interviewed covered into 5 area. They were related to (1) teaching-learning process during Covid 19 pandemic (2) the application used (3) the strength and weakness of online learning (4) response of students' parent (5) the teachers' inhibition

Teaching-Learning Process During COVID-19 Pandemic

The interview results related to teaching-learning process during pandemic were stated below:

- The students were learning at home and the teachers taught them at home as well.
- This process caused by government rule and the school was not allowed them to come to school to learn
- The process of online learning was only applied for three months but because of some reasons the school finally decided to have face-to-face learning by following a strict health protocol.

The Application Used as the Media of Learning

Some findings were stated that:

- Considering the background of level of economic of their family, there was only one application that possible to apply in online learning. That was WhatsApp application. The dominant challenge was that not all students had their own smart phones. They usually borrowed from their parents when their parents got home. Even when their parents were only staying at home, they should share the mobile to the other siblings who also had online learning. Consequently, not all of them could always attended the virtual class.
- The students were not able to operate WhatsApp application very well that is why it stumbled the teaching-learning process especially in submitting the assignment
- There was not WIFI facility provided by school. So, the teacher should provide their quota independently and it absolutely affected their teaching performance.

The Strength and Weakness of Online Learning

In some areas located in city, online learning seems to be an interesting strategy. But it is contrast when the school is located in suburban area. Face-to-face learning ideally suits with it. However, the government rule related to online learning during Covid 19 pandemic, the school has no choice to avoid even though then the school let the students come to study in turn with a tight health protocol.

Some strength of online learning felt were:

- Among students, teacher and administrator were protected from the covid 19 virus
- The quality time for family was greater and it made the strong relationship among of family members
- The students and teachers can learn/teach from anywhere. They used to learn in the classroom but online learning was possible to do in their room, living room, terrace, behind their house and other place at home
- The learning material could be read and learnt again and again when the students were at home.
- Both of students and teachers were not worried to be late to learn as they did in the classroom that they should wake early, get prepared and had traffic jam. Even in online learning they could have breakfast while they were learning.

However, some weaknesses of online learning appeared dominantly such as:

- The economic background of family blocked the success of online learning. It directly caused many problems such not all students were able to have the smart phone and internet quota even though if they had they had to share to their other siblings. They mostly borrowed from their parents when their parents were back from home.

- Media used in online learning was not understood well by all students. They were still difficult to operate it especially in sending their assignment
- Doing assignment commonly used the computer and laptop. Unfortunately, the laptop is something hard to possess by them
- This learning was not suitable for dependent students
- The challenges faced were not ready yet to solve by the school that's why the school decided to regulate face-to-face learning then.

The Response of Students' Parent

The response given the parents dominant showed that they were not ready yet to face the online learning. Because not all of them could facilitate the smartphone, laptop, internet quota and other facilities at home in order their kids to learn. The parents who were not working surprisingly could not help much in order to assist their kids' homework. It was a big burden for them because they got used that the teachers were only source to ask how to do the homework.

The Teachers' inhibition

The inhibitions refer to:

- The lack of students' knowledge and skill during online learning
- A lot of students could not participate in online learning because they had no smart phone, internet quota and other facilities
- The unstable internet during learning
- The school didn't provide Wi-Fi facility very well yet

Online learning has some features such the facilities of electronic devices such smart phone, laptop, Wi-Fi and internet quota and others. For school located suburban actually is not possible to apply this learning because it demands the readiness of students, their family, teachers, administrator and their internet access. In short it is poorly ineffective for the type of this school. Consequently, it created many challenges faced by the teachers and unfortunately it is still biggest work to solve. Face-to-face is actually more suitable in this case.

Conclusion

The online learning conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 61 requires the readiness from all aspects especially from the students, their parents, teachers, administrator, school, environment. The appearing of challenges has to do with it. The finding reveals that the most dominant challenges faced the teacher in online teaching and learning was the lack of the students' knowledge in using the learning application used by the teachers. They were still not getting used yet in this strategy because their mindset in learning was still face-to-face and they were still dependent on their teachers. Another most dominant challenge was the students' limitation of having smartphone and internet quota. These challenges are in need of solution so that the students can learn effectively through this pandemic.

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