

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH FACED BY THE ENGLISH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT SMP PGRI BAREMBENG

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Abstract

The aims of this research are to find out the teacher's challenges in teaching English and the student's challenges in learning English at junior high school during pandemic dealing with learning English online. This research uses qualitative method. The data of this research were collected through questionnaire and interview. The subjects of this research were the teacher who teaches at second grade and the second-grade students at SMP PGRI BAREMBENG that was consisted 30 students which were taken by using random sampling. The result of data analysis found that (1) there are some challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English online at second grade students including, student's interest and enthusiasm in learning English online, difficulty in using ICT, difficulty in providing and explaining learning material, difficulty in measuring student's improvement and achievement and assessing student's work, (2) there are some challenges faced by the students at second grade including less enthusiastic (student's interests and motivation), difficulty in the learning process, and the lack of internet package and internet network.

Keywords— Challenges, teacher's challenges, student's challenges, online English learning.

INTRODUCTION

In 2019 a disease outbreak emerged that shocked the world with the spread of new pneumonia that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, which spread rapidly to more than 190 countries and territories. This outbreak was named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV2), (Susilo, et.al., (2020).

The virus spread rapidly across all over the world until the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this outbreak became a global pandemic in March 2020 (BBC, 2020). Since the emergence of the coronavirus outbreak, various problems have arisen that harm social and economic life. Especially in the educational sector.

According to Almanar (2020), the covid-19 pandemic affected all aspects such as economic, culture and tourism, and education. The emergence of the virus has made the Government Issue various forms of regulations to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. This is of course having an impact on the sector of education. Students are not allowed to have interaction directly with their classmates and teachers because it because being in a crowd is one of the most significant factors in the spread of disease, (Ariyanti, 2020).

In order to make adjustments to what is happening, the government must change the education system quickly by changing face to face learning method to online learning (Agung, Surtikanti, & Quinones, 2020; Al Lily et al., 2020). According to Damayanti & Irwan (2021) online learning is a part of distance education that combines electronic technology and Internet-Based Technology (ICT) with specifically in the learning process.

It is not an easy thing for teachers and students to deal with the condition. The existence of these conditions allows teachers and students to adapt to new habits and face new challenges in teaching learning. Especially in teaching and learning English. Because of this condition, students and teachers have to face new challenges in learning and teaching English. Especially at Junior high school level.

The obstacles experienced by teachers during online learning are learning applications, internet networks and devices, learning management, assessment, and supervision (Rigianti, 2020). According to Kholis Setiawan (2020) on his research titled “Challenges on Teaching Online English

Subject in SMK Negeri 1 Nawangan”, there are some challenges that teachers and students faced in teaching and learning English, such as internet connection, media, and the way to manage the class. According to Novita Diana (2020) (English Teacher's Challenge in the Teaching-Learning Process during Pandemic in Pidie). Generally, there are many obstacles faced by teachers when learning online during the pandemic, such as difficulties in understanding several learning applications, difficulties in evaluating student work, unstable internet networks, and also difficulties in making teaching materials.

Based on the explanation in the background above, the research formulated the questions: 1. What are the teachers' challenges in teaching English at junior high school during the pandemic? 2. What are the students' challenges in learning English at junior high school during the pandemic? Objective of The Research Based on the research question above, the objectives of this research are: 1. to know and to identify the teachers' challenges in teaching English at

junior high school during the pandemic. 2. to know and to identify the students' challenges in learning English at junior high school during the pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Teaching English

In the educational aspect, teaching is the main activity that plays an important role in the teaching and learning process. This activity involves interaction between teachers and students. According to Amidon (1967) cited in Rajagopalan (2019), teaching is an interactive process with some activities in the classroom that involves direct communication. According to Brown (2000, p. 8) teaching is "showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand." In this teaching process, students are given knowledge. Teachers try to teach well and create good learning strategies and tools to help students understand the material being taught so that learning objectives can be achieved. In addition, teaching is also defined as art to lead the learner in ways that are assumed to learn, including the effort to induce students to so behave (Schelechty, 2004). Teaching English in here means teacher give the language knowledge to the learners to make them able speak English (Husna, 2021). The aim of teaching English in schools is to make the students enable to be proficient in English.

2. Learning English

Learning is a process of acquiring a new understanding of knowledge, behavior, skills, values, attitudes, and preferences (Richard Gross). Ambrose et.al., (2010) stated that learning is a process that leads to a change occurring that is a result of experience and increased potential for improved performance and future learning. Learning is about the direct result of how students respond and interpret their experiences. Learning English is a process to acquiring knowledge about language, in this case is English in order to be able to communicate and speak English and understand about the language.

a. Online English Learning

According to Allen & Seaman (2007), online learning is a learning system that do not involve directly face to face between teachers and students. During the process of online learning, the learning process is carried out by teachers and students at the same time by using internet in a different place. It means that online learning is a learning process that requires an internet connection and uses a digital platform and is carried out without face to face. In this process

teachers and students also need gadget and use several applications that can help them during the process of online learning. Several applications that can be used including WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Zoom, Telegram, and so on. According to Carliner (2003), online learning is an access to learning experience that involves technology. According to Rahayu and Wirza (2020), online learning is a learning process when teachers and students no need to go to school, they just teach and study from home by using some technologies. Such as smartphone, laptop or computers tablet, etc.

b. Advantages and Disadvantages of Online learning

Anderson (2008) proposes there are some advantages of online learning for both of teachers and students.

- 1) There is no time zone, place, and distance in the process of online learning.
- 2) It makes students easier to access learning material anytime and anywhere.
- 3) Teaching process can be done anytime and anywhere.
- 4) Materials can be updated and the learners can see the changes immediately.
- 5) The teachers are easier to direct students and provide them appropriate information based on their needs when they access the materials on the internet.

While the disadvantages of online learning according to Hariyati (2020) as follows:

- 1) The dissemination of information in the internet which is not appropriate for all students because it does not appropriate with the students' level of development. Thus, the teachers play important role in selecting sites that contains useful information for the students' needs.
- 2) The ease with which students access information makes them prone to plagiarism by copying someone's work.
- 3) The growth of website in the internet that is very fast makes finding really information difficult.
- 4) The users must be critical to know which information is value because the lack of quality control and not all information in the internet is good. In other words, anyone can post anything including wrong, bad even incorrect information.

c. English Language Teacher

A teacher is someone who educates and imparts knowledge to others. The teacher is someone who plays an important role in the world of education to create a smart young

generation. Teacher also called an educator at school that helps students to gain knowledge, competence or benefits.

Language teacher is a teacher that can help students to identify the concepts of the language and how to use the language for communicate (Miller). While an English teacher is a teacher who has requirement as an English teacher, understand the linguistics aspects and masters English both spoken and written not only because the teacher teaches English (Sari 2017). In other words, an English teacher is someone who teach English to others in order to help students understand about the language and to help them able to communicate and speak English.

d. Challenges Faced by the Teachers and Students

The word challenges derived from the word “challenge” which means the situation of being faced with something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person’s ability. (Cambridge Dictionary). Challenges mean something or problem that is not easy to do and it requires more effort and skill to deal with it. Thus, the meaning of challenges in this research is the obstacles, problem, or something difficult to do (difficulty) that teacher and students have to face when teaching and learning English during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Rahayu & Wirza (2020) teachers found some challenges or difficulties in teaching English during pandemic, those are: difficulties in using ICT and designing, excessing, and explaining material. Teachers should able to use ICT and have good management of online learning. According to Widarini et.al., (2021) on their research “Teachers Strategies in Online Learning During Covid Pandemic”, it was found out that teachers encountered four obstacles, they were: using e-learning tools, teacher knowledge, time management, and student motivation.

According to Rahayu & Wirza (2020) challenges faced by students in learning English during pandemic are: Some students lacked technological infrastructure, quotas for internet access, have been less motivated, also have less parental support. Ariyanti (2020) stated that there are three major challenges that the students faced including unstable internet connection, the use of certain online application by the lecturers that cannot be reach by students who have low internet connection, and healthy reason, being dizzy starring at the screen of cellphones or laptops.

According to Widayanti & Suwarnajaya (2021), the challenges that students face during online classes categorized in two factors namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are coming from within the students, which include motivation, learning attitude, study habit, and personal performance or practice. While the external factors are coming from the outside of the students which are related to the students' surrounding which include the media that the students use and the environment in terms of financial problems and study environment.

METHODS

The researchers used descriptive qualitative design, because these researchers were conducted with a qualitative case study, it is used to investigate the challenges faced by the English teachers and students in teaching and learning English. According to Atmowardoyo (2018), descriptive research is a research method used to describe the existing phenomena accurately as possible. According to Gay et.al., (2012), descriptive qualitative research related to the collection, analysis and interpreting data comprehensively, narrative and visual data to obtain concept about certain phenomena. This research was conducted on January, 26th 2022 until this research finish. There were two subjects of this research. They are teacher who was teaching English at second grade and the second-grade students of SMP PGRI BAREMBENG. The researchers were collected the research data through questionnaire and interview.

FINDINGS

1. The Teachers' Challenges in English At Junior High School during Pandemic

a. Student's Less Interested and Less Enthusiastic in Learning English Online

It becomes challenges for the teacher during teaching process because not all students have good interest in learning English especially in learning English online. It can be seen through the teacher's answer below:

Teacher: *Salah satu tantangan yang saya hadapi dalam mengajar adalah ketertarikan dan minat siswa dalam belajar. Selama pembelajaran online, minat belajar siswa menurun. Mereka tidak bersemangat dalam belajar apalagi belajar bahasa Inggris karena mereka menganggap bahwa pembelajaran online itu tidak bagus. Siswa menjadi malas dan bosan dalam belajar. Mereka bahkan tidak aktif berpartisipasi dalam kelas yang dilaksanakan via WhatsApp. Bahkan sebagian dari siswa hanya mengisi daftar hadir dan tidak memperhatikan kegiatan*

pembelajaran. Lebih parahnya lagi mereka tidak mengumpulkan tugas yang diberikan dengan tepat waktu. (One of the challenges I faced in teaching is the interest and motivation of students in learning. During online learning, students' interest in learning decreases. They are not enthusiastic about learning let alone learning English because they think that online learning is not good. Students become lazy and bored with learning. They don't even actively participate in classes that are held via WhatsApp. Even some of the students just filled out the attendance list and did not pay attention to the learning activities. Worse yet, they do not collect the assigned tasks on time).

b. Difficulty in Using ICT

Teachers find it difficult to use technology or ICT. It can be seen from the teacher „s answer below.

Teacher: Sejujurnya Nak. Sebagai guru yang sudah tidak muda seperti saya mengajar bahasa Inggris secara online bukan suatu hal yang mudah. Kita harus mengajar menggunakan internet dan aplikasi pembelajaran yang dapat menunjang proses pembelajaran online. Tentunya kita harus paham dan familiar dalam menggunakan sejumlah aplikasi yang akan dijadikan sebagai media pembelajaran. Saya hanya menggunakan media WhatsApp dalam menjalankan kegiatan mengajar bahasa Inggris secara online karena untuk aplikasi zoom dan aplikasi lainnya saya tidak terlalu familiar dengan aplikasi tersebut. Karena keterbatasan saya dalam menggunakan ICT ini membuat saya juga kesulitan dalam menyediakan digital material dalam proses pembelajaran. (As a teacher who is not young like me teaching English online is not an easy thing. We must teach using the internet and learning applications that can support the online learning process. Of course, we must understand and be familiar with using some applications that will be used as learning media. I only use WhatsApp media in carrying out online English teaching activities because of the zoom application and others applications I am not too familiar with these applications. Due to my limitations in using ICT, I also have difficulty providing digital materials in the learning process).

c. Difficulty in Providing and Explaining Learning Material

It can be seen from the teacher answer through questionnaire and interview below:
Teacher: Saya kesulitan dalam memberikan materi kepada siswa. Karena mungkin saya sudah tidak muda lagi oleh karena itu saya sudah tidak bisa memberikan materi dan menyediakan materi kreatif mungkin sehingga dapat membantu meningkatkan minat siswa dalam belajar dan dapat diterima siswa dengan baik. Selama pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara online saya

hanya memberikan materi yang ada pada buku cetak, kemudian memfoto materi tersebut dan membagikannya melalui grup WhatsApp. Selain itu saya juga kesulitan dalam memberikan penjelasan yang baik dan jelas kepada siswa untuk setiap materi. Hal itu juga karena waktu yang terbatas. (I have difficulty giving material to students. Because maybe I'm not young anymore, therefore I can't provide material creatively as possible so that it can help increase student interest in learning and can be accepted by students well. During online English learning, I only gave the material that was in the printed book, then took photos of the material and shared it through WhatsApp groups. In addition, I also have difficulty giving good and clear explanations to students for each material. It's also because time is limited).

d. Difficulty in Measuring and Assessing Students' Improvement and Achievement

Based on the teacher answer on the questionnaire and interview, one of the challenges that teacher faced in teaching English online is difficulty in measuring student's improvement, difficulty in assessing student's tasks and difficulty in measuring student achievement. It can be seen through the teacher answer below:

Teacher: *Selama pembelajaran bahasa Inggris dilaksanakan secara online, salah satu tantangan yang saya hadapi adalah kesulitan dalam mengukur pencapaian siswa dan peningkatannya dalam belajar. Saya merasa kesulitan karena untuk mengetahui dan menilai kemampuan dan pencapaian siswa itu dapat dilihat dari beberapa hal antara lain: kehadiran siswa, tingkat keaktifan siswa dalam berpartisipasi selama proses pembelajaran, dan melalui tugas-tugas yang diberikan. Dengan demikian kita dapat menilai seberapa paham siswa dengan materi yang diajarkan dan bagaimana perkembangan dan pencapaian siswa selama proses pembelajaran. Namun, sayangnya pada pembelajaran online, saya sangat merasa kesulitan karena saya tidak bisa hanya mengukur kemampuan siswa berdasarkan tugas-tugas yang mereka kumpul melainkan juga beberapa hal yang disebutkan diatas. Dan pada kenyataannya tugas-tugas yang siswa kumpulkan tidak bisa dipercaya begitu saja bahwa itu adalah hasil kerjanya mengingat tingkat partisipasi sebagian besar siswa yang sangat rendah selama pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara online. (During the online learning of English, one of the challenges I faced was the difficulty in measuring student achievement and improvement in learning. I find it difficult because knowing and assessing students' abilities and achievements can be seen from several things, including student attendance, the level of student activity in participating during the learning process, and through the tasks given. Thus, we can assess how well students understand the material being taught and how the development and*

achievement of students during the learning process. However, unfortunately in online learning, I find it very difficult because I can not only measure students' abilities based on the assignments, they collect but also on some of the things mentioned above. And in fact, the assignments that students collect cannot be simply believed that they are the result of their work considering the very low participation rate of most students during online English learning).

2. The Students' Challenges in Learning English At Junior High School during Pandemic

a. Less Enthusiastic (Student's Interests and Motivation)

Based on the results of questionnaire and interview of students, during online learning, students feel less enthusiastic about learning.

Question: What do you think about learning English online?

Student 1: *Menurut saya, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris jika dilakukan secara online itu tidak bagus karena materi pembelajaran menjadi susah dimengerti. Saya kurang bersemangat dalam belajar karena kurang memahami materi yang diberikan guru.* (From my opinion, learning English online is not good because the learning material is difficult to understand. I become less enthusiastic in learning because I cannot understand well about the material that has given by the teacher).

Student 2: *Saya tidak suka kak belajar bahasa Inggris secara online. Belajar secara langsung (tatap muka) saja kak biasa membosankan apalagi belajar secara online. Saya menjadi tidak tertarik karena kebanyakan mencatat terus.* (I don't like learning English online sister. Learning English online more difficult than learning English directly (face to face). I become not interested because during the learning process is more writing activity).

Student 3: *Tidak bagus, membosankan karena tidak dapat dijelaskan secara langsung oleh guru.* (Learning English online is not good because the material is not explained clearly by the teacher).

b. Difficulty in the Learning Process

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview, the difficulties experienced by students in learning English online can be seen in several student answers based on several questions related to difficulties in the learning process.

Question: If you find difficulty in the learning process, what makes you difficult to understand?

Student 1: *Susah memahami materi pembelajaran karena tidak dijelaskan dengan jelas. Beda kalau belajar bahasa Inggris tatap muka kak, kalau ada yang tidak dimengerti bisa ditanyakan secara langsung kepada guru.* (Difficult to understand the learning material because it is not

explained clearly. It is different when we learn English directly (face to face), if there is something that is not clear it can be asked directly to the teacher so we can get clear explanation).

Student 2: *Materinya kadang-kadang susah dimengerti kak karena tidak dijelaskan oleh guru ditambah masih banyak kosa kata yang saya tidak tau kak. Jadi saya merasa susah untuk memahami pembelajaran dan kesulitan dalam mengerjakan tugas.* (The learning material sometimes is difficult to understand, because it is not explained by the teacher. In addition, for me personally there are still many vocabularies that I don't know. So, I think that I really difficult to understand the material and also the exercises).

Student 3: *Biasanya terlalu banyak materi kak dan tidak dijelaskan dengan baik oleh guru. Guru juga tidak memberikan contoh jadi kita susah untuk mengerti.* (There are too many learning materials while the teacher didn't explain the material well. The teacher also didn't give an example of the exercise. That's why it makes me more difficult to understand).

c. Lack of Internet Package and Internet Network

In other to support teaching and learning process, the internet connection must also be good. That's why student should have good internet connection and enough an internet package to join the process of learning. But unfortunately, it became student's challenge during the learning process. It can be seen from the student's answer below.

Question: What are the challenges that you faced during the process of learning English online?

Student 1: *Salah satu tantangan bahkan jadi kendala utama dalam proses belajar adalah kekurangan kuota. Kita tidak bisa mengikuti kegiatan pembelajaran kalau tidak ada kuota kak. Masalah yang lain juga adalah jaringan internet yang kadang-kadang juga tidak bagus dan itu sangat menghambat proses belajar kak.* (One of challenges even becomes the main challenges in the learning process conducted online is less internet package. We cannot participate in the learning process if there is no internet package. Another problem is internet networks. Sometimes internet network is not good and that is really become hampering factor in learning online in this case learning English).

Student 2: *Koneksi jaringan internet dan kekurangan kuota internet. Selama pembelajaran online, kita cuma sekali kak dibagikan kuota dari pihak sekolah. Selebihnya itu beli sendiri dan kadang juga kehabisan kuota jadi tidak bisa mengikuti pembelajaran.* (Internet Connection and lack of internet package. During the process of online learning, school just provide internet

package once. More than that is become students' responsibility to buy it. So, sometimes when my internet package runs out, I cannot participate in the learning process).

Student 3: *Kehabisan kuota dan jaringan yang biasa juga tidak mendukung kak. Kuota juga kak memakan biaya, karena orang tua saya juga orang yang tidak mampu jadi biasa kak kehabisan kuota. Mungkin ada juga yang tidak masalahji kak dengan kuotanya tapi sebagian dari kami terkendala dengan itu. Selain itu, menurut saya kak haruski komplit dua-duanya supaya bisaki ikuti pembelajaran secara online. Itu juga yang kasi malaski untuk berpartisipasi dalam kelas kalau missal jaringan sudah tidak mendukung.* (Lack of internet package and internet networks that sometimes is not supported. Internet package also takes high cost then because I am a student from low family income so that is become my problem and also another student. Besides that, from my opinion both of internet package and internet connection should be complete in other to make the learning process running well. It also that makes student bored and lazy to participate in the learning process).

Discussions

According to Rahayu & Wirza (2020) there are some challenges found by teachers and students in teaching and learning English during pandemic. Teachers found some challenges or difficulties in teaching English during pandemic, those are: difficulties in using ICT and designing, excessing, and explaining material. While challenges faced by students in learning English during pandemic are: Some students lack technology as a supporting tool in online learning, lack of internet package, fewer motivated students, and fewer parent's support.

1. The Teacher's Challenges in Teaching English at Junior High School during Pandemic

One of the challenges for the teacher in teaching English online is related to the student's interest and enthusiasm of students in learning. During online learning, teachers found it difficult to make students enthusiastic about participating in the learning process. Students feel that learning English is already difficult and it gets even more difficult during online learning. They become lazy and not enthusiastic about following the lesson.

Teachers also find it difficult to use technology or ICT. Not all teachers are able to use computers technology or gadgets during the learning activities. The teachers might able to use computers but they still confused to operating gadget or some application that can support teaching process. In other words, teacher's ability still limited. In addition, the teacher found it

difficult to provide and giving interesting material to students because of their inability to compose learning materials and edit video presentations that contain learning materials.

Another challenge faced by the teacher is the difficulty in assessing and measuring student progress and achievement. Teachers also feel confused in giving assessments to students. This is because the teacher does not know whether the students really understand the lesson well or vice versa. Because all of that is not only measured through the tasks they collect. Teachers also feel unsure about the results of student work. Because during online learning, the level of participation and enthusiasm of students in learning is very low, it is possible that their work is taken from the internet or from other friends.

2. The Students' Challenges in Learning English at Junior High School during Pandemic

Based on the findings, students feel less enthusiastic about learning. Students feel that learning English becomes more difficult to understand when carried out online so they become not interested and lose motivation in learning. Therefore, this is a challenge faced by students in learning English during a pandemic in other words during online learning.

One of the challenges faced by students in learning English online is finding it difficult in the learning process. Difficulty in the learning process is a condition where students feel difficulty during the learning process. The difficulties experienced can be caused by several things. Difficulties experienced by students include difficulties in understanding learning materials, difficulties in doing assignments, and lack of knowledge about vocabulary.

Learning English online, of course, involves the Internet as a supporting tool so that students can follow a series of learning processes. Online learning requires an internet network (Damayanti & Irwan, 2021). In other to support teaching and learning process, the internet connection must also be good. Meanwhile, not all students have good internet access. In addition, to access the internet, an internet data package is also required to be able to connect to the network. However, this is one of the challenges or problems faced by students during online English learning.

Based on the findings, it can be seen that the challenges that teacher and students faced in teaching and learning English are relevant with the previous study conducted by Rahayu and Wirza (2020). However, in this research, teachers faced more challenges than the students. Nevertheless, the challenges faced by the students may be more difficult. In this research, student's interest and enthusiasm in learning become teacher's challenges because during online English learning, students less interested and enthusiastic in the learning process so it

becomes teacher's challenges. Besides that, the students faced difficulty in the learning process. Difficulty in the learning process means something difficult that students faced in learning including difficulty in understanding material and doing the assignments. It is different finding from previous research that is explained above. In the previous research students didn't faced difficulty in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding and discussion in the previous chapter, the researchers take conclusion in two: there are some challenges faced by the English teacher and the students through online learning during pandemic. There are some challenges faced by the teacher in teaching English online at second grade students. The first is student's less interest and enthusiasm in learning English online. Besides that, some challenges that the student's faced in learning English online including; less enthusiastic (student's interests and motivation), difficulty in the learning process, and the lack of internet package and internet network.

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