Investigating the Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Remote Teaching During COVID-19 Emergencies at Indonesian Senior High School Context: A Qualitative Descriptive Study

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Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a rapid shift from traditional face-to-face teaching to remote learning in educational institutions worldwide, including Indonesian senior high schools. This qualitative descriptive study explores the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during this transition, focusing on technology infrastructure, student engagement, assessment, and adapting teaching methods. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two English teachers who teach at XII and XI grade at Sma Negeri 1 Seririt and Smk Karya Usada in Buleleng regency. The findings reveal that EFL teachers experienced difficulties in accessing and utilizing technology, maintaining student engagement, developing and administering effective assessments, and adapting their teaching methods and materials for remote instruction. The findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of EFL teachers during the pandemic, as well as recommendations for overcoming these challenges, including improving technology infrastructure, enhancing student engagement, developing new assessment methods, and providing professional development opportunities for EFL teachers. This research contributes to the understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on EFL education in Indonesia and offers a foundation for future studies and policy-making in the area of remote EFL teaching.

Keywords: COVID-19, remote teaching, teaching challenges, Senior High School.

INTRODUCTION
The COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread disruptions in education systems around the world, resulting in a rapid transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to remote learning (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). In Indonesia, senior high schools have been significantly affected by this change, particularly in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Nurhayati, 2020). EFL teachers have had to quickly adapt their teaching methods, materials, and strategies to accommodate remote teaching (Bao, 2020).
However, there is limited research on the specific challenges faced by Indonesian EFL teachers during this transition (Nurhayati, 2020). Since the appearance of COVID-19, online remote teaching in regular classrooms has posed significant challenges for teachers, particularly in Indonesia, as they adapt to the digital element in the twenty-first century. This transition may alter the traditional education system for English teachers (Ferri et al., 2020). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, remote teaching tools have been employed, such as video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet, as well as Learning Management Systems (LMS) that integrate with messaging applications like WhatsApp and Telegram. These tools facilitate temporary and rapid shifts in educational delivery due to emergencies, requiring teachers to adapt their teaching methods regardless of their school’s location or size.

However, this research has proposed a sample by examining video-recorded teachers to analyze the challenges faced in remote teaching. According to Thi & Luy (2022), there are eight key challenges that educators encounter in this new remote teaching environment, as they navigate the limitations of teaching through a screen. This research also investigates the role of teachers in English language education, focusing on student-centered learning in the context of EFL students. It has been found that some schools have not implemented this approach effectively, and certain remote teaching tools may be underutilized or untested due to the complexity of the technology and the difficulty in learning and operating its features.

The sudden shift to remote education has created a significant learning curve for everyone in the educational field, as they are forced to quickly adapt to new technologies. This study focuses on the challenges faced by teachers in this rapidly changing context and seeks to understand the implications for the future of education. By identifying and addressing these challenges, stakeholders can better support teachers and students in navigating the new landscape of remote teaching and learning.

Another point of view that contrasts in this research is the examination of different teacher roles and academic language functions, particularly in Senior High Schools or vocational schools in Buleleng Regency, such as SMA N 1 SERIRIT and SMK KARYA USADA. These schools were chosen for the study because they are the only ones that implement both remote teachings using video conferencing and Learning Management System (LMS) in West Buleleng, a small district with a small society. This research will compare the results of two English teachers who are taught at different grade levels: XI in nursing and hospitality significance, and XII in social and language primary class based on a video recording of the teacher in the online class. The significant difficulty level of materials, classroom management, and how teachers handle these challenges based on age or experience factors are considered in this study.

The importance of this research is to understand the challenges that arise and are faced by teachers in remote teaching. According to Mazlan et al. (2021), challenges faced by teachers during remote teaching include battling to engage students with coursework, a requirement for adequate professional development and preparation for teaching online, and difficulties in getting students to collaborate. Additionally, teachers need to familiarize themselves with various web platforms used for remote education (Ujianti, 2021). This challenge may be due to a need for more training and professional growth.

By examining the experiences of teachers from different school types and grade levels in Buleleng Regency, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by EFL teachers in remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study can contribute to the development of contextually appropriate policies and practices to support EFL teachers and improve remote EFL teaching in Indonesia.
METHOD

The context of this study is significant as it aims to examine remote teaching in senior high schools, specifically focusing on online class activities related to Hamruni’s (2010) theory. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to analyze the academic language functions used and the challenges faced in this setting. The study will involve a plural case analysis, with two teachers per class forming the research group. To ensure a comprehensive and robust understanding of the research topic, the study used a triangulation method, incorporating both observation and interview techniques. Observations will be conducted to learn about the instructors' responsibilities and the challenges they face in remote English instruction. Interviews will be used to gather information about the difficulties teachers encounter in their roles within this context. The research process consisted of six stages: conducting library research, designing instruments, testing the validity of instruments using Gregory’s formula, collecting data, evaluating data, and preparing a research report. The data was evaluated qualitatively, with researchers remotely observing high school instructors teaching English. Following Naibaho’s (2019) recommendations, data analysis involved data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This combination of methods and approaches helped ensure that the study’s findings are both accurate and reliable.

Figure 1. Data Analysis Technique (Miles & Huberman, 2002)

Table 1. Method of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Methods of Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What challenges does a teacher encounter in remote teaching at SMA NEGERI 1 SERIRI and SMK KARYA USADA?</td>
<td>-Observation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The English Teachers List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Teachers (pseudonyms)</th>
<th>Length of career</th>
<th>Teacher’s grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ms. Puput</td>
<td>Ten years</td>
<td>XII Social &amp; Language Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the researcher prepared some questions for teacher 1, Ms. Puput, from SMA NEGERI 1 SERIRIT, and teacher 2, Mr. Yoga, from SMK KARYA USADA, which would be asked using Hamruni's (2010) table of relevant checklist of observation sheet, and the teacher's answer could be an explanation, as noted by the researcher based from an actual recording data below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Teaching and learning components</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Effect to the role of teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>The teacher faced challenges during remote teaching. They will not open the camera in all videos and need to know if students understand.</td>
<td>The effect is that the teacher cannot see all of the students joined the class and cannot assess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>For the students still faced in all videos, the first is shy and unconfident. Also, the student had technical such as connection and did not have a quota.</td>
<td>That caused the effect to hesitate to speak and not follow the whole learning activity well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The objectives</td>
<td>The researcher did not find the challenges in objectives for all videos</td>
<td>No effect the objectives in remote teaching run well because the teacher not directly explained the vital object and makes students try to find.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Learning material</td>
<td>For learning material for all videos, the challenge is for the teacher must finish to explaining all the material before times out in 1 hour or more</td>
<td>Based on that management, the effect of the teacher continued to give them tasks individually, and it took a long time in held the remote teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Learning activity</td>
<td>The challenges in a learning activity for all videos are that sometimes there are no answers from students if the teacher asks.</td>
<td>Moreover, caused that the effect of the teacher perseverse calls the students' names to answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Method of teaching</td>
<td>In the teaching method, especially in remote teaching, the teacher uses the students center method to arrange teaching online for all videos, and the teacher discusses the students' performance to be active.</td>
<td>No effect appeared in the specific effect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Media of learning
For the learning media, the teacher did not challenge using media such as operating the computer tool, zoom features, and sharing screen pictures and videos. No effect in there

8. Source of learning
For the source of learning in all videos, the teacher had prepared the slide well, and if students could not see, the teacher provided to share the link in the What is App group. Not affect a source of learning

9. Evaluation
For challenges in evaluating all videos, the teacher instructed students to submit tasks again out of group discussion for students who could be more active or join the online. The effect is that if the student has yet to submit, the student cannot get the minimum subject score or standard with absence supported.

Table 3 in this section shows the result from teacher 1, Ms. Puput, about the challenges faced by teachers doing remote teaching within remote teaching. For the interview, the researcher was available to 3 questions based on the theory by Hamruni (2011).

Excerpt 1: "Managing the student, especially the student's behavior, their awareness to ignored."

The teacher also faced different challenges in behavior. As said above, the students ignored the teacher and English class for uncertain reasons.

Excerpt 2: "I tried to give them some suggestions to be a good student "please do good," "you are human, and you have ears, please hear." you will have a good result."

Based on what the teacher said above, because many students the teacher needs help to guide them, and whether the teacher gives them in front of a class or not, it is up to students to think.

Excerpt 3: "I give them playing games if student not interest, "okay class how about playing game now."

To minimize the behavior challenge, the teacher decided to make them happy by playing a game together to gain the students' attention.

Table 4. Table of Video Recording 1 & 2 of XI Nursing and Hospitality major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Teaching and learning components</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Effect to the role of teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>The teacher had faced challenges during remote teaching as student's enthusiasm in all videos and sometimes the voice of students not being heard in the learning process</td>
<td>The effect is that the teacher cannot see all of the student's moods or situations happened in students while joining the class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>For the students who still do not know to speak in English to answer the question in all videos</td>
<td>That caused effect is teacher must be an effort to connect and try to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The objectives in all videos the researcher found the challenge is teacher directly explains the point or essential object and focuses on explaining the material by itself. The effect is that students be able not to hear the teacher's explanation and do not try to find the critical object, and the student does not have a chance to argue with each other.

For learning material for all videos, the challenge is for the teacher not to be on time in the teaching duration to finish explained material. Based on that, the effect is that students still do not understand what they are going to do because the time is short.

The students had been instructed to discuss the challenges in a learning activity for all videos in the What is App group in an online class. Moreover, it caused the effect of teacher complexity to tell someone who was going to answer the question because he only focused on other platforms and must retell again what the meaning of the question given in the learning activity was.

In the teaching method, the teacher does the students' center method too but still had the challenge appear from student's performance, not all to be active. The effect appeared the effect in the teacher role. Only the teacher answered the question.

For the media of learning, the teacher can use the tools to operate google meet to share screen the slide with a smartphone but not include pictures and videos, also not show used quizzes or jump aboard as said in all video recordings. The effect is a monotonous condition.

For the source of learning in all videos, the teacher put all the sources in 1 link and only provided it in google classroom. The effect on the source of learning is that students need free access to learning sources.

For challenges in evaluating all videos, the teacher used google from to assess the student's understanding and used google classroom to check their attendance. No effect on there is a role.

Table 4 in this section shows teacher 2, Mr. Yoga, ’s result about the challenges teachers face in remote teaching within remote teaching. For the interview, the researcher was available to 3 questions based on the theory by Hamruni (2011). The result is:

Excerpt 1: "Is student enthusiast because not all have a good situation."
Teacher 2 also faced challenges in behavior, especially in student's interests and needs, while joining the online class

Excerpt 2:

"By preparing well as I can, I prepared the ppt, Canva, and infographic."

As said by the teacher above, the teacher gave them all the effort and kept the spirit to make an exciting class activity while maintaining all of it in the media of learning as possible.

Excerpt 3:

"I tried to prevent giving punishment."

The teacher said that to minimize the challenges, punishment like not being willing to join the class for two meetings can make students afraid and think if they misbehave in English class again.

Discussion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become increasingly prevalent, with teachers employing both synchronous and asynchronous methods to facilitate education in Indonesia (Lawrence & Tar, 2018). A variety of online technology tools have been utilized for teaching speaking skills, addressing the first research question (RQ1). Teachers have used video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet (Rachman et al., 2022) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Google Classroom and Schoology for instructional management. However, due to students’ limited internet quotas (Kahu, 2013), some teachers have opted for video conferences that require less bandwidth, rather than using LMS platforms exclusively. In addition, Hockly (2014) found that concerns about students' access to materials influenced technology integration, leading some teachers to supplement their LMS with the WhatsApp application to minimize internet usage. Kusuma (2020) discussed the challenges of using various tools for remote teaching during the pandemic. One such challenge is the preference for video conferences over LMS platforms (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Another challenge is ensuring that teaching English includes not only the delivery of material but also the use of additional tools such as quizzes and padlets, which provide engaging and interactive elements for students (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012). The results showed that the online learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has involved a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods, various online tools, and adaptations to address students' limited internet access. Teachers have utilized video conferences, LMS platforms, and messaging applications to deliver instruction while ensuring that the learning experience remains engaging and interactive.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the education system worldwide, particularly highlighting the challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in remote teaching in rural Indonesian senior high schools. This study has identified the primary challenges faced by these educators, including limited access to reliable internet connectivity and technological resources, insufficient training in remote teaching methods and digital tools, difficulty in maintaining student engagement and motivation, increased workload and time spent on lesson planning and content creation, and challenges in assessing student performance and providing feedback.

To address these challenges, several potential solutions have been proposed. They include; (1) investing in infrastructure improvements: By enhancing internet accessibility and providing appropriate technological resources in rural areas, both EFL teachers and students
can benefit from improved connectivity and a more stable remote learning environment, (2) providing ongoing training and support: Offering targeted professional development opportunities for EFL teachers to learn remote teaching methodologies and digital tools can help them adapt to the online learning environment and deliver more effective lessons, (3) implementing strategies to enhance student engagement: Encouraging the use of interactive tools, fostering a sense of community in virtual classrooms, and promoting active learning methods can help maintain student motivation and participation in remote learning, (4) Encouraging collaboration and resource-sharing among EFL teachers: By creating platforms for teachers to share lesson plans, teaching materials, and best practices, they can benefit from each other’s experiences and reduce the burden of content creation, and (5) developing alternative assessment methods: Emphasizing formative assessments, project-based learning, and peer evaluations can provide a more accurate picture of student performance in remote learning contexts, allowing EFL teachers to better support their students’ progress.

By implementing these solutions and providing the necessary resources and support, it is possible to create a more effective and engaging remote learning environment for both EFL teachers and students in rural Indonesia. This study contributes to the understanding of the challenges faced by EFL teachers in remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and institutions to enhance the overall remote teaching experience. As the future of education continues to evolve in response to global challenges, it is essential to prioritize the needs of educators and learners in rural communities to ensure equitable access to quality education for all.

REFERENCES


