Exploring Challenges and Problems in the Online-Teaching Practices during the Covid-19 Outbreak: Secondary Schools Context

Hersulastuti[1], Purwo Haryono[2]
{hersulastuti@gmail.com[1], pwharyono@gmail.com [2]}

Universitas Widya Dharma Klaten, Klaten, Indonesia[1,2]

Abstract. The present study aimed at exploring challenges and problems encountered by secondary schools English teachers in Klaten, regency as they performed online teaching during the Covid- 19 outbreak. It was conducted through descriptive qualitative research involving 15 teachers-participant. Questionnaire, observation, and interview were used to collect the data. Triangulation techniques were employed to examine the trustworthiness. Afterwards, the data were analyzed using interactive model, consisted of: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusions [14]. The findings showed that there were many challenges for teachers to develop new approaches and strategies for adopting ICT in the online teaching practices. Some advantages were also clarified. Most participants experienced in using the virtual learning tools, such as, zoom, google meeting, and google classroom combined with social medias: whatsApp group and instagram. However, teachers still encountered some problems, i.e. limitation in using other learning platforms, difficulties in managing the virtual class, low internet connection, time constraint, technical problems, and problems in conducting assessment. Such problems were potential disrupted the learning effectiveness as teachers got to allocate more time for handling those obstacles.

Keywords: challenges, problems, online learning, secondary school

1 Introduction

Like in many other countries in the world, the outbreak of Covid-19 has created a disruption in education sector. To enable students to continue their study at the time of physical isolation, hence, educational institutions should adopt smart solutions to prevent the spread of this virus. This crisis has been strongly forced the academic organization to improve their curriculum and the usage of new instructional methods and strategies should be of utmost significance [1]. Following WHO recommendation, Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has enforced at-home distance learning in any level of education. Consequently, teachers of all subjects have to adopt ICT in their daily teaching to date with the sudden shift from the face-to-face schooling to online teaching-learning through various platforms.

Online learning, has been tremendously used in time of pandemic. The term e-learning refers to the attainment and use of knowledge that are predominantly facilitated and distributed by electronic means [2] both synchronous or asynchronous mode [3]. It provides an efficient transfer of knowledge anywhere and any time, regardless of subject matters, and opens up a world of learning unavailable in most corners of the world [4]. Some researchers have narrowed this definitions as any learning that is internet-enabled or web-based, use computer network technology to provide information and instruction for learners.[5], [6]. Research evidence indicates that proper implementation of online can improve the efficiency of the educational processes learning because of its instant access and flexible scheduling. In broader sense, it can improve teaching pedagogy, instruction methods, curriculum design, and language learning [7]. Specifically, in English classroom, it also provides numerous benefits for students who can participate in various asynchronous and synchronous learning activities to improve language proficiency [8]. Other studies affirm that online environment can improve classroom engagement, communication skills, and self-confidence and enhance teachers and students' convenience. Furthermore, students motivation can also increase if the learning activities are fun and engaging.[9], [10]

Although online teaching has a wide range of benefits, other evidences prove that for teachers who are new to online teaching face many issues in their courses [11]. From students perspective, digital activities may lead to students being distracted by other online content. [12], such matters may inhibit their engagement in the learning activities. Taking all into account, the current study is aimed at exploring challenges and problems encountered by secondary schools English teachers in Klaten regency as they performed online teaching during the Covid- 19 outbreak. Hopefully, the result of the study can fill some of missing data and can add more dimensions on online learning from different setting.

2 Methodology

This descriptive qualitative research was undertaken to 15 English teachers as participants. Necessary permission have been taken to the headmasters of the teacher-participants taking parts in this study. To protect their privacy and dues to the ethical purposes of the research, they were written as T1, T2, T3, …and T15. Data were obtained from questionnaires, observations, and interviews.

The questionnaires were distributed to teacher-participants of 10 Secondary Schools in Klaten (8 government schools and 2 private ones) using WhatsApp and E-mail. It consisted of the participants identity, years of teaching experiences and 6 closed items, regarding their responses towards the implementation of online – learning models in their English learning during Covid-19 outbreak. Another 3 open questions were listed to dig out the challenges, the learning platforms they used, and some problems encountered. The interview was carried out to participants to strengthen the information derived from questionnaires. It was conducted through both individual WhatsApp calls and WhatsApp conference calls for further clarifications. Whereas the observation technique was done by observing 2 video recordings as they were performing their virtual classes (Zoom and Google meet). It was done to capture the

factual condition of learning process. Another technique to observe was by joining as member of the WhatsApp Group they used for teaching.

To ensure the trustworthiness, this study employed data /source and methods triangulation. Following Guba's framework, triangulation is the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories to verify the data for improving credibility of findings and interpretation [13]. Further, the interactive model analysis was used for data analysis [14]. The flow consisted of (1) data collection, (2) data condensation; (3) data display; and (4) conclusion drawing and verification. After all the required data were collected, the analysis went to the next phase of data condensation. Data were selected, simplified, transformed, and coded. At this point, the irrelevant data were discarded. Data obtained from interviews and observations were abstracted and transformed into description. Data from questionnaires were analyzed descriptively. Next, all the condensed data were then displayed into description to make them understandable, and finally, in the last stream of data analysis the researchers drew conclusions by giving meaning and interpretation of the data, rechecking the process, and assessing the implications for the questions at hand. In addition, verification was used to cross-check or verify the emergent conclusions. In doing so, the researchers referred back to data display and raw data.

3 Finding and discussion
3.1 Challenges Associated with Online Teaching and Learning: Teachers' Perspectives

Analyzed from the questionnaire, among of 15 teacher-participants, in term of teachers' qualification, 3 of them hold magister degree, 4 of them are still continuing their study to the magister program, and the rest 8 hold the undergraduate degree. The years of their teaching experiences are ranging from 2 to 36 years. In general, they use various online -teaching platforms, both synchronous or a synchronous learning i.e., Google Meet, Zoom, Google Form, Quizzes, You tube, Microsoft Sway, Google Doc, Google Slide, *Rumah Belajar*, and other social medias like WhatsApp group and Instagram. How they respond to questionnaire items is shown in table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Teacher-participants' responses to the use of online-learning in teaching English

	Statements	%
1.	I support the government policy to launch online teaching and learning during the covid-19 outbreak.	100
2.	In my opinion, online teaching and learning is challenging	100
3.	I agree that online teaching and learning shift the teacher' roles	100
4.	Sometimes, I do not feel confident applying various online teaching and learning platforms.	46,66
5.	I am benefitted by using online teaching and learning in this Covid-19 pandemic.	100

| 6. I experience with problems associated with using online teaching and learning. | 100 |

To strengthen the findings, 7 teacher-participants from 5 schools were interviewed randomly. They were T3,T5, T7, T9, T13 and T15. In line with the first statement, all the interviewees support the government policy to enforce the online teaching and learning during the pandemic in all education levels. In other words, they accept the migration from face-to-face schooling to virtual/ online learning. They understand that such teaching-learning is considered to be the most appropriate solution for students to continue their learning activities while they have to stay at home to avoid the spread of the virus. It is not an option but becomes a necessity. "…I think online learning is a good solution for schooling to protect and save our students (T7/In/I). " Yes…I support this policy considering that students have to continue their learning.. (T13,/ In/I). In fact, online teaching and learning plays a crucial role during the pandemic. It helps instructors, schools, or universities facilitate students learning during period of schools and universities closure. The findings highlight some arguments in the previous studies that online learning can serve as a panacea in the time of corona virus crisis [15].

To date with the second statement, all teacher-participants (100%) consider that online teaching and learning is challenging. Further analysis shows that they are challenged to integrate ICT in their teaching practices. This leads them explore and develop new approaches and strategies to give access for students to continue their learning activities. In doing so, some practical considerations should be taken for the feasibility. As T3 said,

"... even long before pandemic, I have integrated ICT in my teaching practices though it not the real time meeting, I often use E-mail for students' tasks, and sometimes use authentic material from Youtube . At present, I prefer use WhatsApp Groups, and Google Meet. Actually… I have used zoom for several times but students complain of the quota consumption" (T3/In/I)

Another voice from T9, she highlights the teachers' challenges in applying online teaching and learning that teachers must adopt the technology in their teaching practices as this is relevant with the 21 st century learning and 4.0 industry revolution. Further she said,

*," …Yes, I agree that we need to develop our skill to integrate ICT to perform the lessons in more interesting way, I hope that schools can provide teachers with some trainings as not all of us have good knowledge of integrating technology as well…, however such of pandemic, it should be done contextually, it might be different from one school others…"(*T9/In/I).

This findings support previous study that to gain success, there are several factors which affect the usage of online learning system, i.e., technological factors, online learning system quality factors, trust factors, self-efficacy factors, and cultural aspects [16]. Therefore, teachers -participants in the study are challenged to improve their knowledge and skill to use technology in their learning.

In response to the changing shift of the teachers' roles in online teaching and learning, all participants (100%) claim that their roles in online/ virtual class have changed from 'performers' in face-to-face class to deliver instruction to "guides" who must make adjustment to the deliver some contents suitable with their online learning platforms. Teachers are responsible for keeping students motivated during the learning process, inviting student-to-student communication, and providing feedbacks. They should maintain the attention optimally to make students focus on the information being presented.

15 explained that the term 'facilitator' in online teaching and learning meant wider in the reality. Not only providing students to learn through the material presented, imparting information to students, engaging them to respond and interact with other students, and giving feedbacks, but also migrating to be "consultant and trainer" in technology. In addition, T7 argues that, " teachers migrate from "experts" in subject matter to "facilitators" who empower the learning by considering the learning environments" (T7/In/I). Strengthening to this point, T5 added that in many times she acted as a tutor for her students. Observed from her class when she applied zoom meeting, she provided some tutorials and simulations for ensuring the optimum quality of her teaching practices. The findings indicate that teachers are impacted from the use of online learning in their teaching practices. Similarly, another study has identified various activities that teachers can perform as facilitators, i.e., leading student discussion, providing open-ended questions, guiding process and task, and enabling active participation of learners with ideas [17].

In regard with teachers' confidence in using various online-learning platforms, teacher-participants (46,66%) claim that they sometimes do not feel so confident as well. They admit that 'confidence' is closely link to " capability". Teachers' knowledge and capability using technology in their teaching practices will directly give impact to students. Despite this, as they try to apply a certain platform for the first time, they feel unsure whether or not the process and the delivery can run smoothly. In another word, there is still fear about any technical problems that exist out of their capability to handle. They believe such problems might hinder the learning process, especially in zoom meeting and google meeting, where students can directly access in face-to-face interaction. An important note derived from T3'zoom class, he looked a bit anxious as he could not admit student -to-student communication in his virtual class, he tried out and said "…*what goes wrong with this?... wait… tunggu sebentar .. "* (T3/O/I). Such a matter can cause teachers feel unconfident in their performances. This finding highlight the recommendation to deal with such issues, that teachers should make a scenario planning for their lesson. Planning is the key, if plan A fails, they should have plan B ready [15]. This implies that teachers' preparedness can enhance confidence in their practices.

All teacher-participants (100%) get benefits of using online-learning in the time of corona crisis. The adoption of online learning in their teaching practices enhances their efficacy of knowledge and qualification. It fosters their familiarity of using technology in their classrooms. Further explored from the interviews, some of the advantages the teachers get include providing students with direct access to the instructions while they are staying at home to keep health protocols. Online teaching and learning offers teachers with many ways of interacting with students and moreover they can give direct / instant feedback to students' tasks. This is inline with the previous evidence that in such of pandemic, online learning encourages more productive use of time which keep individuals safe, moreover it is a cost-effective technology which is quite affordable that enhances communication between educators and students [19]. Teacher-participants in this study reveal the fact that such learning offers both teachers and students with flexibilities and enables them to apply theories and practices through video, live chat and real-time interaction. From the students' perspectives, the finding affirms the previous study that flexibility is an interesting aspect that makes them able to schedule, or plan their time for completion of courses available online [15],[18]. In addition, *"...it promotes practicality as there are many applications that can be used for delivering contents, marking the tests, or rechecking the students' submission .."* (T13/In/II). All in all, online teaching and learning is the best solution at this

andemic. It is recognized that technology plays major roles to provide solutions at times f crisis to beat the disruptions.

3.2 Teacher's Problem Area: Evidencing from the Online Teaching Practices

Despite the claims that online learning brings some advantages in the teaching ractices, all teacher-participants (100%) experience of different problems that hinder their instructions. The finding reveals 6 problem areas as presented in the figure 1 below.
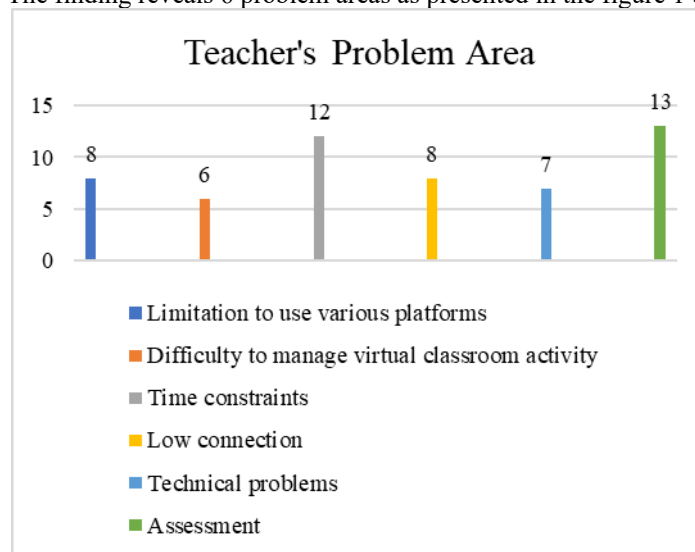

Figure 1. The teacher's problem area

The graph shows that from 15 teacher-participants in this study, 8 of them face roblems relating with the limitation of using various online teaching- learning platforms. hey admit of the lack knowledge and practical demonstration of other platforms that might e complicated to operate. T4 usually uses WhatsApp groups for sharing the materials, and oogle form for delivering test. She has never applied Zoom or google meet to provide real me interaction. Differently, T1 often uses WhatsApp and Google classroom, he does not xperience of using other platforms. Meanwhile, T10 uses *Rumah Belajar*, one kind of earning Management System (LMS) which allows teachers to create virtual classes. As ited in Singh & Thurman' study, Shivangi argues that implementing online teaching and earning can be delivered through the use both synchronous and asynchronous learning nvironments [15]. The result of the interviews indicates that teacher-participants use both f them. In synchronous learning, teachers use Zoom, Google meet, WhatsApp video onference, or live chat that can display real-time interactions between teachers and tudents. While in asynchronous learning, there is no real-time instruction, instead the ontent is available online for students to access. Teachers use pre-recorded video, social hedia platforms, You tube, and Instagram. The participants claim that there is not any ingle platform best suits for all learning. Pointing out this case, it is good for teachers to ttend for trainings to enhance their ability to be more techno-friendly.

Six teacher-participants face problems in managing the virtual classroom activities. In most learning process, students tend to join their classes without video to reduce the quota consumption. Hence, teachers can not interact directly with students as they want to assign them to perform certain assignments or answer questions. Such matter can reduce collaboration among students. Different from face-to-face classroom, most students in virtual class feel isolated causing the ineffective interaction. Students' slow response, is another problem encountered that makes teachers convey the directions repeatedly. In different setting, students become noisy and crowded that everyone wants to talk at the same time. Such condition makes teachers difficult to maintain the supportive learning environment, even can break students' motivation as well. In reviewing previous studies conducted by Swan, Paloff & Pratt, in the following study, Beaudoin, et. all found the fact that social structure has a strong influence on students' learning and satisfaction and on the method by which the course is presented. Students have need for social connection and a sense of presence in electronically mediated distance education [20]. In such settings, participants can become part of a social milieu with anyone with a computer. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to establish human relations with students in an online environment though it might seem a difficult task, but is hardly impossible to do .

In relation with time constraints, it is true that adopting a new technology can be a time-consuming process. 12 teacher-participants experience of facing such various problems which are different from one to others. It takes quite a bit of time to prepare, plan, and teach in online environments. Most teachers report that they spend countless hours preparing lesson plan or putting materials which are taken from the printed books into the online materials that can be accessed by students. Citing from Taylor's study, Appana highlights that both teachers and students also perceived interacting online to be time consuming [21]. In different setting, the observation conducted in Zoom class showed that most students were too late to join. T3 has opened and run the class for more than 30 minutes, but only 5 students have joined. Such matter disrupt not only time management but also activities which have been planned.

Problems relating with low connection or internet instability are cited frequently occurred in many classes. Eight teacher-participants have encountered this issue. Most teachers in this study have installed Wi-Fi at home to support their needs, however, they have experienced of having low connection problems in their practices. Low bandwidth and weak internet connection can affect how quickly teachers can invite or admit students to join the class, even disturb the quality of video or voice. T3 and T9 have ever got such problems as they are sharing screen the material in zoom or google meet classrooms, or using Sway, suddenly the internet connection is lost and unrecovered, this can be frustrating and discouraging. Furthermore, students who live out of town or in remote districts sometimes are failed to open the application or download the presentation because of the internet instability. Previous research has identified accessibility issues which include internet connectivity, using compatible smartphones and laptops. It is noted that accessibility as an important challenge to online learning as this can be attributed to different geographical locations used for the studies [22].

Research demonstrates that 7 teacher-participants are found to get technical problems in their teaching practices. In delivering instruction, most teachers use laptop, and smartphones.. As noted that the necessity to use technology for instructions out of the normal face-to-face environment leads for instruction anywhere and anytime and potentially might increase such hindrance. The term technical problems refer to the interruption that

:achers encounter when interfacing with technology. Technical problems are always otentially troublesome in the case of videoconferencing and virtual meetings. Highlighting ie study conducted by Taylor, Appana argues that issues such as sound and video quality an be affected by network traffic, improper set up, and other technical parameters [21]. hough it is not a necessary for teachers to be as experts in technology, they should have asic skills to carry out the function properly. For that, teachers need a certain degree of :chnological proficiency to prevent from getting technical problems. In consequence, :hools have greater responsibilities to facilitate the technological supports and ifrastructure to guarantee the compatibility and flexibility for teachers to adapt to different evices and platforms for successful practices. The fact shows that although students learn ·om home, but schools regulate a schedule for teachers-participants to come to schools for elivering instructions. Such problems can bring negative effect on important training utcome and create obstacles in adoption of the system by many students. [16]

Conducting assessment in online teaching and learning is a fundamental aspect of istruction. It becomes the most crucial problem for teachers. Clearly, there are numerous ·ays to assess students' learning progress or achievement using many applications. hirteen participants in the present study reported of facing various difficulties as students ·e likely to experience less homework, less assignment, or lack of test. Not surprisingly, iany of problems encountered due to the impact of distance among teachers-students, lack f interaction and communication which makes students miss substantial directions, and ie need to use authentic assessments. First and foremost, authentic assessments require mger time for students to accomplish as it typically has higher grade than an average quiz r multiple test. Most teachers in this study currently use multiple choice test through oogle form considering its practicality. Some others use different technique, such as live) &A, presentation, quiz, assigning students into some projects, i.e., writing or video iaking. Referring to the previous study, it is difficult for teachers, specifically to assess a roup project. Teachers need longer time to do various tasks, such as monitoring students' ommunication skills, evaluating the group work, assessing each member and the whole roup, and providing a feedback [22]. For that, the current study reveals when it is in form f written project, teachers need to give toleration for the late submissions, use ompromised rubrics and prevent students' academic dishonesty.

4 Conclusion

The overall discussions presented throughout this paper have described the factual conditions in English online-teaching practices. How teachers are challenged to adopt technology and use various platforms to enable students to study anywhere and anytime have been clearly highlighted. It is not a matter of option, but a necessity. As covid-19 crisis is still in continuation, teachers have to be more techno-friendly to accommodate the shifting roles in their online learning environments. It is recognized that the adoption of online learning in their teaching practices enhances their efficacy of knowledge and qualification. Despite some of its merits, there are many problems encountered which can be categorized into six major problems areas, i.e., limitation in using various platforms, difficulty in managing virtual activities, time constraints, low connection, technical problems, and assessment. Such problems inhibit the practices and affect to the learning effectiveness. For that, the current study urges future researchers to explore how teachers do their best effort for obtaining practical and

creative solutions by considering the feasibility and student's different learning style and skills to earn optimum quality of their practices.

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