TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROCESS VIA ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

During the Covid-19 pandemic, many teachers and students were doing the teaching and learning process from home. They experienced many problems during the remote instruction. Therefore, the objectives of this research were to investigate the teachers' perceptions and obstacles in the process of teaching and learning English by using online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The method used in this research was mixed method, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. The instruments used were a set of questionnaire and interview. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistic. In addition, the interview result was analyzed qualitatively to describe the obstacles. The result in the questionnaire indicated that most of the teachers were against the implementation of online learning, i.e. 55.45% and 44.54% teachers were in favor of this method of instruction. The problems can be categorized into technical and situational problems. These problems can be resolved depending on teachers' teaching experience, condition, and situation. Teachers can give the learning module to the students, and the teachers must be creative in delivering the teaching material. In addition, parents' support is very crucial for maintaining students' motivation, enthusiasm, and expression during online learning.

Keywords: *Covid-19, ELT, obstacles, online learning, teachers' perception*

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INTRODUCTION

Because teaching is such a personal activity, it's not unexpected that various teachers have quite diverse perspectives and assumptions about what makes good instruction. Besides, there are no two people who do it in the same way. Teaching effectiveness is often dependent on the personality and individual talents of the instructor (Estes, Welch, & Ressler, 2005). They have their ideas in delivering the teaching and learning process. The relevance of language acquisition for employability, education, skill development, travel, enjoyment, cultural understanding, and communication has been acknowledged by the majority of English instructors (Guilherme, 2007). They need to play a role in the context of the educations curriculum. According to Guilherme (2007), knowing how teachers learn in the curriculum context represents an opportunity to simultaneously evaluate teacher learning, classroom practice, and student learning.

Nonetheless, English language teachers are expected to come into the classroom and educate students face-to-face based on their opinions of their pupils, school administration, curriculum, and society in the process of English language teaching (Fishman et al., 2013). When a teacher comes to the school and teaches their students face-to-face, they can teach the materials to the students in their way. Teachers show how materials are interpreted and presented to students, and professional development is a key to helping teachers build the capacity to use the curriculum well (Fishman et al., 2013).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, it is crucial to keep social distancing from others and stay at home to minimize the spread of the virus (World Health Organization, 2019). Due to the rising number of persons infected with Covid-19 in Indonesia, "large-scale social restrictions" were introduced in March 2020. Other laws followed, such as people working from home, praying from home, and students from early childhood education through higher education attending school from home (Regulation of Indonesian Government No. 21 of 2020, 2020). The global spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on practically every facet of life, including schooling, and Indonesia has been no exception. In terms of the teaching and learning process, kids of all ages are unable to attend school and must rely on teachers to assist them in studying at home. For months, this situation persisted. Fortunately, online education provides a solution; nevertheless, the instructional strategies used are not identical to those used in face-to-face classrooms or via online teaching and learning.

Feldman and Zucker (2002) defined online teaching and learning as the government's new guidance on the internet. They state that the online instructions include interactions in real-time (synchronous) and anytime, anywhere (asynchronous). They think there are two parallel processes in an online world too. First, students become more active and reflective learners. Second, students and teachers engage in learning through technology and become more familiar with the technology. Teachers should provide a practical online learning experience and curriculum relating to their subject matter.

Stakeholders experienced several challenges during the introduction of the School from Home (SFH) program (March to early September 2020), particularly schools that were suddenly required to implement SFH. The usage of SFH has brought obstacles in developing online learning systems, particularly in terms of facility utilization and infrastructure availability, which has been limited thus far. Furthermore, the shift from conventional face-to-face educational techniques to more indirect approaches such as using online platforms/media has led schools to participate in a learning flow with complexity and constraints. The study objectives were to investigate the English teachers' perceptions toward the use of online learning platform and to find out the obstacles faced by English teachers and the solutions in teaching and learning English via online learning during Covid-19 of English teachers at senior high school in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar. They have given English material via online learning that consists of 20 teachers.

Every instructor has a unique perspective on how to utilize online learning. Perception is how you feel about something you've done, and it may be represented via your attitude. The perspectives of teachers are an important part of describing the learning environment (Lee & Tsai, 2005). It indicates that a teacher's perspective can have an impact on a student's conduct. To achieve successful learning, teachers' perspectives will be included in the learning evaluation. Previous studies by Erdemir and Ekşi-Yangın (2019) and Al-Munawwarah (2014) show that educational technology plays an essential role in language learning. Hence, enhancing digital literacy among students and teachers has recently become one of the key requirements of teacher education programs. Besides, research by Windiarti et al. (2019) also describes the obstacles that teachers faced in the implementation of e-learning in the learning process and the teachers' recommendations to solve the problems. This research showed that the teachers were not adequately familiar with e-learning, so they still experienced many obstacles in the

teaching and learning process by using e-learning. There are several obstacles frequently faced by the teachers, including obstacles in teaching by using e-learning as devices, teachers' knowledge, time management, and student's motivation. The teachers also suggested solving the problems by providing training for the teachers and repairing the institution's facilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' Perceptions

Perception is the method that selects, receives, organizes, and interprets information from the external environment to make it meaningful to people. In addition, Darmuh and Akib (2017) define that perception as the process that people take to govern and interpret sensory perception to give significance to their environment. According to Diniah (2013), perception is the process when we become conscious of several stimuli affecting our senses. Similarly, Sobur (2009) indicates that perception is part of the overall mechanism that generates the reaction after human beings are applied to the stimulus. From the descriptions, it can be inferred that perception is an ability to respond to the general stimulation process, and after seeing and recognizing something, we become conscious of something.

In addition, Rakhmat (2009) states that some factors that influence perception are functional/personal, systemic, and cultural factors. First, the needs, experience, inspiration, hope, focus, emotion, and situation consist of functional/personal factors. Second, structural variables consist of stimulus intensity, stimulus quantity, and stimulus contradiction. Cultural factors are a factor in the life of a person. The experience of the teachers may be one of the teachers' tests for the student. The instructor will understand what learners need to learn through perception. The study about perception, beneficial and allow teachers to teach more effectively.

Online Learning

We were in the age of advanced information technology at this period. Through the Internet network of computer media, communication technology has evolved. The internet is a network of knowledge linked to the device over the phone. The internet is also known as cyberspace, data superhighway, online messaging, digital library, and the digital revolution. Teeler and Gray (2000), the internet is

an information network linked to a device connected to a telephone network. Learning in the learning strategy mode is based on the use of the internet, also referred to as online learning.

In distance education, online learning has its origins. Online learning is a common term used on this continuum to describe anything that integrates digital technologies into the learning process (Feldman & Zucker, 2002). It is possible to define online learning as a form of distance learning mediated by technical instruments (technological tools) where learners are geographically isolated from the teacher and the main institution. Online learning is designed to facilitate the distance learning systems of the learning process. It is one of the learning aids bundled in an interactive online learning application that enables teachers and students to connect in an asynchronous framework. Online learning in a distance learning environment provides students with learning support resources and enables additional services to help them understand and analyze the subject matter of teaching materials being studied.

Teachers' Perceptions toward the Use of Online Learning in Teaching and Learning Process

The implementation of online learning in the teaching and learning process has been increasingly growing in English language teaching, especially in the context of EFL and ESL (Suherdi, 2012). According to Atkins and Vasu (2000), teachers' perceptions have a critical impact on the use of online learning in English language instruction (ELT). According to Kizil in Diniah (2013), teachers' expectations about the benefits of using online learning for language teaching affect the decisions of teachers about the use of online learning. Similarly, Atkins and Vasu (2000) note that the attitudes and expectations of teachers are correlated with important factors affecting the effective introduction of online learning into English language teaching. Some teachers may be happy and optimistic about employing online learning in ELT in this regard, and others may be hesitant, and some may even refuse to learn it (Suherdi, 2012). However, as quoted in Dashtestani (2012) asserts, there is a difference between the perceptions and values of teachers and their actual application of technology in their classes. In other words, it is believed that a positive attitude towards online learning does not mean that teachers in the classroom will use online learning (Mollaei & Riasati, 2013). This is possibly due to certain variables that may deter teachers from adopting online learning

In addition, great deals of research have been carried out to seek teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of online learning in teaching the English language, including the obstacles and solutions in online learning use by teachers.

Teacher obstacles toward the Use of Online Learning in Teaching and Learning Process

Several studies have addressed the obstacles to incorporating online learning into teaching and learning environments. Schoepp (2005) describes the problems of integrating online learning in education, especially online learning, which has a complex process and can face many challenges as obstacles.'

Balanskat, Blamire, and Kefala (2006) point out that while educators seem to understand the importance of online learning in education, difficulties continue to be experienced during the process of incorporating the online learning framework into teaching. The challenges mainly concern teachers as they are the leading executors of the integration. Bingimlas (2009) claims that lack of trust in teachers, lack of qualifications for teachers, resistance to change and negative attitudes, lack of time, lack of effective training, lack of accessibility, and lack of technical support are obstacles to the integration process. Since the obstacles are based on educators, Kurniawan (2014) considers seeing them from teachers' point of view.

Jurich (2001) also clarifies several challenges that teachers encounter in teaching by using an online learning platform. These obstacles are categorized as follows: (1) Lack of familiarity with the technology. Teachers lack a sufficient understanding of the potential and limitations of technology, and even the minimum technological glitches that will undoubtedly arise can not be handled; (2) Lack of adequate planning. Technology is an instrument that allows teachers and students to access educational resources. The results will not be effective if the technology is not implemented into the overall lesson plan; (3) Lack of access. The most efficient innovations, such as the internet, are often the most costly or large initial investment in constructing this framework (buying computer hardware and software or smartphone, establishing connectivity, buying the internet quota, etc.). The lack of software is also a lack of control.

Technology is an instructional facilitator that can significantly contribute to the standard of teaching and learning experiences. Altun (2015) suggests those laptops, smartphones, tablets, and any other

platforms offer powerful opportunities for learning foreign languages and are increasingly used by students so that teachers need to equip themselves with the latest technology.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research is a mixed-method. Mixed-method research is research which combines both qualitative and quantitative research. Cresswell (2014) mentions that the mixed method research not only involves the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended) data in response to research questions but also involves both quantitative and qualitative analysis and interpretation in the study. This study used close-ended questionnaires (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative) as the research instruments. The quantitative data from the questionnaire consisted of teachers' perceptions toward the use of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire consisted of 20 statements in the close-ended form. The questionnaire used a Likert scale. Five options were provided in the questionnaire, i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. The teachers requested to answer by themselves. The statements of the closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics with percentages.

The qualitative data were obtained from interviews with the teachers related to their problems and solutions in the teaching and learning process through online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The researcher also used a written note and voice recorder to record the participants' answer. The researcher used three processes to analyze the data based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014): data collection and condensation; data display; and data verification or drawing conclusion.

This research involved 20 English teachers working in public senior high schools in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar, and they were teaching English using online learning. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the sample. Only the participants who agreed to participate in this research were selected to be the sample. The objects of this research were teachers' perceptions of the English language teaching and learning process online during Covid-19, the problems teachers face, and the solutions in teaching and learning English via online learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Questionnaire result

The questionnaire focusing on English teachers' perceptions toward the use of online learning platforms in the process of teaching and learning during Covid-19 was prepared 20 statements by the researcher. Scales and percentages provided the table of questionnaire results consisting of all of the statements.

Table 1. Teachers' perception (pro) in ELT using online learning during Covid-19.

Item no.	Percentage of teachers' perception choice (%)				
	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Undecided*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
1	50%	30%	20%	0%	0%
2	10%	40%	35%	15%	0%
5	35%	55%	5%	5%	0%
6	15%	70%	10%	5%	5%
7	15%	45%	5%	30%	0%
8	20%	25%	40%	15%	0%
9	15%	40%	25%	20%	0%
15	0%	30%	20%	40%	0%

According to the result of the questionnaire above, the teachers' pro in using online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process. Based on the statements, teachers agreed with using online learning because they could save much time collecting the students' work with online submission for assignments; and they also easily send the material to students. The teachers did not need to collect students' papers or assignments because the platform helped. Datuk and Ali (2008) say that online learning offers such benefits as flexibility, accessibility, and convenience that can enable learners to access material at any place and study at their own pace and place. Wong and Looi (2011) state that teachers can teach in various situations whenever they choose to learn, and they can easily and rapidly shift from one scenario or context to another.

In addition, Carl (1991) has given a detailed list of the positive aspects of online learning such as (1) online learning platforms can be monitored more easily than the traditional classrooms, and (2) online

learning platforms may result in cost savings. Jung (2001) stresses that the role of teachers is more critical than ever before in EFL settings because teachers are able to inspire students and try to build non-threatening, meaningful, and affectively supportive language learning environments through the use of web technology.

Table 2. Teachers' perception (contra) in ELT using online learning during Covid-19.

Item no.	Percentage of teachers' perception choice (%)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3	5%	20%	35%	40%	0%
4	5%	55%	15%	25%	0%
10	50%	35%	5%	0%	10%
11	5%	0%	15%	45%	35%
12	5%	10%	20%	60%	5%
13	30%	40%	10%	20%	0%
14	10%	40%	25%	25%	0%
16	10%	50%	20%	15%	5%
17	20%	60%	5%	15%	0%
18	15%	45%	5%	35%	0%
19	10%	40%	25%	25%	0%
20	85%	5%	0%	0%	0%

Based on the finding, teachers were also frustrated in using online learning platforms because of the slow-speed internet on their mobile phones. Feldman and Zucker (2002) state that connecting to the internet plays an important role in influencing the learning process. If the connection can operate efficiently, the Internet connection is not a concern for the teachers and the students.

According to research findings, the teachers still had problems using online learning platforms. These problems may be related to the use of computers or smartphones, computer error, or any other technical problems such as lack of access to the computers or any other technical problems with devices at home. According to Solc, Legemza, Sutoova, and Girmanova (2012), if a computer and internet connectivity is available, online learning does not require investment in infrastructure on the user's side. In addition, the researcher also noted that the teachers agreed that they needed to learn some troubleshooting technology tasks

to help themselves when using the online learning platform. Reeder, Macfadyen, Roche, and Chase (2004) said that the online learning software should be accessible to make the learning process successful. The program cannot be accessed if the device is inaccessible. In addition, the teachers also claimed that school facilities were not adequate in supporting online learning because most of the schools were not prepared for the pandemic situation, and they did not predict that there would be a need for online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process.

The result of the statement also mentions that online learning platforms were not so effective in teaching and learning because the teachers did not know students' enthusiasm, motivation, and expression. According to Wlodkowski (2005), students' motivation will emerge from the learning process in the face-to-face model. Macharia and Pelser (2012) state that sometimes, online learning will increase students' motivation and decrease it at other times. Windiarti et al. (2019) said that the students' motivation is not stable in online learning. Besides, from the result of the research, most teachers agreed that they motivated the students in teaching and learning English using online platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic, but their students were still unmotivated to participate in the teaching and learning process.

Unfortunately, in the statement, the teachers chose undecided when answering about the teachers' enjoyment of working using online learning platforms because they were not familiar with this type of instruction. During Covid-19, all of the teaching and learning processes had to be done at home, so parents' support was needed in the teaching and learning process using the online learning platform. Karataş and Oral (2015) state that the support of parents, teachers, and government (central and regional) is urgently needed in the SFH process.

Interview result

In order to answer the second research question that is to find out the obstacles faced by English teachers and the solutions in teaching and learning English via online learning during Covid-19, this section uses the interview results to answer this research question. The teachers' primary obstacle in using the online learning platform was related to technical and situational problems. The technical problems identified include lack of internet data package, poor signal quality, and lack of smartphones among the students. Altun (2015) suggests that laptops, smartphones, tablets, and any other internet accessing devices offer powerful opportunities for learning foreign languages and are

increasingly used by students. Thus, the students need to have any of those devices to equip themselves with the latest technology. According to Windiarti et al. (2019), if a computer and internet connectivity is available, online learning does not require investment in infrastructure on the user's side. An Internet connection is one of the issues on the computer. Muslem, Yusuf, and Juliana (2018) states that the most efficient innovations, such as the internet, are often the most costly in constructing this framework (buying computer hardware and software or smartphone, establishing connectivity, buying the internet quota, etc.). On the contrary, the teachers mentioned that most students did not have money to buy the internet data and the smartphone because their parents' incomes were very low during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Related to the situational obstacle, the researcher found that teachers could not explain the material to the students effectively because they could not meet the students face-to-face; and the teachers did not know students' enthusiasm, motivation, and expression while they attended the online learning. Alim (2019) suggests that in online learning, students are expected to engage in the process of online learning actively. Students should read the module, read the initiation, do exercises, be involved in discussion groups, and finish the tasks and assignments to keep up with good learning. Meanwhile, about the problem of parents' support and students' motivation, Jurich (2001) states that because of the bustle of the students' parents, the students mostly did not have full support from their parents in online teaching and learning process. Subsequently, the students lost their motivation in the teaching and learning process. The instructional system during the School from Home (SFH) period changes because of the Covid-19 pandemic and impacted learning activities between teachers, students, and parents.

In this study, the teachers also offered solutions to solve them. For the technical obstacles such as inadequate internet data, the Indonesian government provided a large internet data plan for the teachers and students. For the poor signal quality, the teachers suggested using Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) with high speed to maintain the signal. Therefore, they could still deliver the material to students. Then, for students who did not have a smartphone, the teacher suggested that they ask their friends about the learning material or meet the teacher at school by following the health protocols. The teacher also gave extra time to submit the assignment because the students had to submit their work to

teachers' houses or schools because they did not have a smartphone to send the homework.

For the situational problems related to inability, teachers could give the learning module to the students, so they could read the module. If they did not understand the material, they could ask the teacher. Regarding the students' motivation, the teachers had to be creative in delivering material during the teaching and learning process and always monitored their students by asking about students understanding to see their responses. If the teachers noticed that some students were not enthusiastic about learning, they had to bring back the good atmosphere by making jokes or giving some time to relax. Parents' support also helped to make students enthusiastic in learning. The school could invite the parents to the school to let them know about their children's development, such as what students had done and what they had not related to the teaching and learning process through the online learning platform.

On the contrary, from 20 statements that the researcher gave to the participants, 12 answers were against the implementation of online learning. The researcher noted that most teachers considered this type of learning difficult for students and teachers. The teachers could not manage the classroom effectively, and they found it difficult to explain the material using an online learning platform because sometimes the students did not understand the teachers' explanations. Alim (2019) suggests that in online learning, students are expected to actively engage in online learning. Students should read the module, read the initiation, do exercises, be involved in discussion groups, and finish the tasks and assignments to keep up with good learning.

Windiarti et al. (2019) suggest numerous recommendations to help instructors overcome their issues. Students and instructors alike are constantly learning about online learning. Teachers will require training to acquaint themselves with this teaching before they can put it into practice. They still ran into certain issues, and they needed to be supervised by professionals. Other instructors should be informed of technology before implementing online learning, according to the interviewees. They should get training to assist them in meeting the learning objectives. The teachers should therefore have a positive attitude regarding the students' responses to online English learning. According to Wilson and Cooney (2002), teachers' preparation is necessary to help them teach online learning. This will allow educators to understand more about online learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The teachers were dominantly against the use of online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process. According to teachers, they preferred in-person instruction because most teachers considered it difficult to explain the teaching material using an online learning platform. An online learning platform was also considered ineffective in teaching and learning because the teachers could not know the students' enthusiasm, motivation, and expression.

The teachers experienced technical and situational obstacles when teaching online classes. The technical problems include inadequate internet data, poor internet connection, and lack of smartphones among students. The situational obstacles are an inability to explain the material to the students effectively because they could not meet the students in person and an inability to know students' enthusiasm, motivation, and expression. To solve these problems, the teachers reported that, for the technical obstacles, the teachers and students used the internet data provided by the government efficiently, used Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) with high speed to maintain the signal quality, and students asked their friends about the learning material and also received extra time to submit the assignment. In addition, related to the situational problems, the teachers gave suggested that they give the learning module to the students. Teachers also recommended that they be creative in delivering material during the teaching and learning process to attract students' motivation. Finally, the teachers expected that students' parents support their children's learning process because it is crucial in maintaining their motivation and enthusiasm during online learning. The schools should invite the parents to let them know about their children's learning development.

This study suggested that teachers be more creative in using online learning platforms so they can manage the function of online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process. The teachers are also suggested to provide interesting and useful material and use relevant learning media to succeed in the teaching and learning process using online learning platforms. The school should support teachers to prepare the facility to make online learning more effective and efficient, i.e, by providing good internet connection, adequate internet data, and smartphones to the students who do not have one. The teacher should deliver a module to students before the teaching and learning process. Then, the teacher should gain the student's participation with their

creativity, so the students do not feel bored during the teaching and learning process. Finally, the parents should support their children's learning process to make them enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process.

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