

# ENGLISH TEACHERS' CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN ONLINE LEARNING PROCESS DURING COVID-19

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## **Abstract**

This research is conducted because of Covid-19 that has been going on for almost 2 years and it affect to the teaching learning process at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong. The objective of research is to know and describe challenges and strategies faced by English teacher in online learning (OL) as long as pandemic. In this research, the research used qualitative research. The source of data came from 3 English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong. The technique that used to collect data by using questionnaire. The data was analysed by using Miles and Huberman model. Three stages were used in analysing data, namely data reduction, displaying data and drawing conclusion/verification. The result of the research showed that teachers' undergone several challenges at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong, namely; (1) uneven network, (2) limited facility, (3) student learning lost, (4) Students were not so serious to the lesson and (5) willing to explain the explanation two or three times. whereas, teacher's strategies were used English teacher in SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong during OL were; (1) Teacher did not force the students to have too much (2) Limiting the material and homework (3) motivating and supporting the students (4) Inviting student to joke so they don't get bored right away (5) Trying to present interesting learning process for students. So, it can be concluded that network affects to the students' ability in understanding the material in the classroom.

**Keywords:** challenges, online learning process, strategies

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Covid-19 has conducted more than two years in Indonesia. This virus is spreading very quickly to countries around the world (Hairunisa & Amalia, 2020). And it has many impacts to many sectors, especially in Education. In Education sector, Covid-19 has caused education not to run well. It caused by the

teaching process has changed, especially in the activities of the teaching and learning process which changed from face-to-face learning to online/daring. Changes in the learning process are certainly experienced by school, teachers, students and parents which pose various challenges in the learning process (Yusuf

Siregar & Amiril Akbar, 2020; Tukan, 2020 ; Putri, N.P. & W, Hadisaputra, 2021). The challenges, of course, will affect the students' achievement.

The challenges were faced by the teacher and students during applying online learning (OL), namely teachers mostly send material without giving explanations so that students cannot fully understand the lesson (Yuzulia, 2021), signal/network problems that result in slow access to information so that sometimes information is missed (Bhuana & Apriliyanti, 2021 ;Yuzulia, 2021 ;Tukan, 2020), educators should think again about the learning models and methods that will be used, OL activities during pandemic indicates that not all pupils are acclimated to online learning. It showed that there are still many teachers that are not adept in utilizing internet technologies when the teaching was running or social media and students do not yet have facilities that support online learning processes such as; mobile phones or smartphones, the digital infrastructure is not evenly distributed, the unpreparedness of educators regarding teaching materials, to the unavailability of devices to carry out the online education process (Gurung, 2021 ;Tukan, 2020 ; Rosalina & Elyani, 2020). Understanding in utilizing technology is the most important thing in online learning. Because delivering material can be conducted through handphone, laptop, and other.

The challenges in teaching learning process are also felt by the teachers and the students at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong. SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong is located in the Siborongborong sub-district, Tapanuli Utara district. This school has more than a thousand students who come from various areas that are still relatively rural, where the network connection is very weak and we have to go up to the

highlands to get the network. But that is not a big matter for students to stop studying during the current pandemic. Students decided to keep going on. During the teaching was conducting, teachers had difficulties in knowing students' abilities. Not only that, the teachers also cannot control the class well. So, teachers needed a strategy to solve it.

To face and solve the challenges during OL learning. The teacher should have strategies so that they are able to deliver the material easily to the students. Tukan (2020) said that some of the strategies that can be conducted in teaching during online, namely developing material, doing assessment, do evaluation, using method in teaching, joining an application in giving material, and giving motivation. While Sutarto (2020) said that the strategies that can be used in online teaching namely, giving understanding to the students about learning, giving material clearly and briefly, apply media and do evaluation. So, it can be concluded that developing material by combining a method in teaching, it can improve students' interest in learning.

Based on the explanation above, the writers are interested to investigate teachers' challenges and teachers' strategies in online teaching process during covid-19. In accordance with it, so the aims of this research is to know and describe the teachers' challenges that faced by the English teacher. Besides that, it aims to know the strategies that used in teaching during pandemic runs.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. Online Learning**

The emergence of covid-19 requires that all activities be carried out from home or "Work from Home (WFH) including teaching and learning. Schools are closed so that learning is carried out

remotely as a solution or called Distance Learning (Online). Online learning means learning that is carried out online, using learning applications and social networks and is carried out without face-to-face, but through available platforms, (Entis Sutisna, Lina Novita, 2020; Zhu & Liu, 2020). Online learning is learning that uses the internet network with connectivity, flexibility and the ability to create various types of learning interactions (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020). E-Learning is an internet-based learning method or online learning that must be lived by all students at Indonesia and even all regions in the world that have been exposed to the Covid-19 pandemic in order to continue the face-to-face learning process which is constrained by social distance or not gather to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Dadang, 2021). So it can be concluded that online learning is learning that takes place online, with learning applications and through platforms that are already available of course, teachers, students, lecturers, students and all education sectors make massive immigration from face-to-face learning to distance learning (online/online). As in the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 4 of 2020 in the second point it is said that policies related to learning are carried out from home with an online system (on the network / online).

Learning can be done with various types of media. The media used to support online learning include, WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom and other applications. This media must be skillfully mastered by educators and students so that the learning process runs effectively. Azkiya & Sari, (2017) asserted that all kinds of media can be interesting when used skillfully. Therefore, teachers will face more severe challenges. They must modify appropriate media, methods, and

learning strategies. Where teachers must be able to create and transfer knowledge, online learning is the same as face-to-face learning. So teachers also have to choose the type of application for online learning so that it can be adapted to the various obstacles that will be faced

#### **b. Teachers' Challenges in Online Learning**

The spread of COVID-19 has been running for almost 2 years, which has resulted in the learning process being carried out online as well. Zhu & Liu, (2020) Online learning is defined as the experience of transferring knowledge using video, audio, images, text messages, software, and the use of the Internet. This online learning uses applications as supporting media such as; WhatsApp, Google Classroom, Google meet, Zoom and other applications. As a result of changes in processes that occur in the world of education today, of course, it will cause various challenges faced by schools, educators, students and even parents. Several previous studies found challenges, according to Yusuf Siregar & Amiril Akbar, (2020) that online learning has a huge impact on teachers such as, not all teachers are able to use devices in online activities and need assistance. Meanwhile, Tukan, (2020) teachers and students also have difficulty using the application, and a big problem for teachers is an unstable signal/network. So it can be concluded that in terms of implementation there are still several obstacles:(1) Students have limited gadgets/laptops/computers. (2) Internet access that cannot reach all areas (3) High internet access fee (4) Internet access is available, but the signal is sometimes weak(5) Do not have access to electricity in certain areas. However, on the other hand, there is an opinion which states that online learning

has positive advantages or impacts. (Nuraini et al., 2020; Sutarto et al., 2020) This online learning has several advantages such as; learning can be anywhere, lower cost of transportation, having lots free time.

Therefore, the challenges of the world of education during the Covid-19 pandemic have become an interesting phenomenon. In fact, all educational units inevitably have to implement distance learning. Creativity, innovation and mastery of technology are a must for educators (teachers). The task of teachers is not only to teach, but also to guide, train, and educate. The challenge of teachers in managing learning requires creativity and innovation in order to realize meaningful learning. Usually face to face, now teachers are required to use technology. Therefore, teachers must be able to try to develop their skills in the use of various teaching media (Jacobs, 2013; Yulia, 2020). Like it or not, teachers must master technological tools/media as a learning support and prepare interesting strategies to realize the achievement of learning objectives.

### c. Learning Strategies

Teaching and learning strategy is a plan in the selection of learning components consisting of stages or learning patterns to achieve learning objectives. This means that educators choose methods, strategies, learning media to achieve quality learning. Learning strategy is a method or approach used by teachers to organize students' materials, methods, media, equipment and time so that the learning process can run well, (Ragin et al., 20220; Santosa et al., 2020). In other side, it can be used as an equipment in language learning (Imansari et al., 2022). So it can be concluded that the teaching strategy is a method taken to achieve learning

objectives.

In the online learning process, the teacher must have a different strategy than before. Various strategies that emerged after the pandemic from several studies. In Tukan, (2020) said that there were 5 strategies in online learning, including (1) Watching the video tutorial, (2) Choosing suitable Applications, (3) Arranging the new learning Schedule (4) Developing Creativity in designing the material, and (5 ) Giving the simple material and task to the students. According to Sutarto (2020) several strategies were found, including; giving students an understanding of the importance of learning in any situation, prepare learning materials are short, clear, easy to understand and interesting, choosing a simple and attractive learning media, evaluate learning regularly and continuously. Yandi (2021), the strategies were ;1) Giving video material, 2) Accepting students' assignments anytime 3) Using concise and dense material, 4) Using Learning Games 5) Giving students the praise/reward, 6) Give evaluating learning process.

Based on the explanation above, can be concluded various strategies used in online learning during the covid-19 pandemic, namely (1) Choosing suitable Applications (2) Giving video material (3) Arranging the new learning Schedule (4) Prepare learning materials are short, clear, easy to understand and interesting. (5) Developing Creativity in designing the material (6) Giving students an understanding of the importance of learning in any situation (7) Accepting students' assignment anytime (8) Using learning games/ ice breaker (9) Giving students the praise/reward (10) Evaluate learning process regularly and continuously.

### d. Previous Research

The writer finds some similar

studies related to this research and have the same field of study problem. It is used to guide this study and to evaluate wisely the strength and the weakness of this study with others study.

- 1) Tukan (2020) discusses about teachers' challenges and strategies in using application in pandemic situation at SMA/SMK/MA in Yogyakarta, Gunungkidul, Magelang, and Kebumen. In his research, he found that teachers had the challenges in (1) operating the application during online learning, (2) developing the material, assessment, and evaluation in teaching, (3) developing the teaching method, (4) combining the material and application, and (5) motivating the students and parents. In the previous research discusses about the challenges and strategies in using application while this research discusses about teachers' challenges and strategies in online teaching.
- 2) Simamora (2020) discusses about challenges that faced by student in learning essay. She found that challenges experienced by the students while studying online, such as, positive and negative impact of online learning economic conditions, anxiety during online learning, government should think and planned, the risk of user data security, face to face class to online learning, ability, finding effective online learning, and expectations. Tis research just discusses about students' challenges without discussing teachers' challenges in pandemic situation.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, this research design was a qualitative descriptive research. This research aimed to learn about challenge's types have to deal with by the teachers as long as Online learning

process and the teacher's strategies used to solve the problem itself. The English teachers from SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong were the subject of research. The writers used questionnaire as the instrument collecting data. Some questions were provided by the writers. The writers gave the questionnaire to the teachers directly. The writers asked some questions in a paper and given time to teacher to answer it. Then, the writer got the teachers' answer. After collecting the data, the data was analyzed by using Miles and Huberman analysis. In this case, there are three stages that used in analyzing data, namely data reduction, displaying data and drawing conclusion/verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The aims of the research are to find out (1) challenges faced by English teachers in online teaching and learning process; and (2) strategies used by English teacher for online teaching. To know the English teachers' challenges at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong, the writers proposed two questions, namely: 1) *What difficulties did you encounter while teaching and learning as long as online learning?* 2) *What are the challenges that you face during the online learning process?* The questions are proposed to the three English Teachers. Here is the answer of the English teacher about the questions.

- 1) What difficulties did you encounter while teaching and learning as long as online learning?

Informant 1 : The difficulties that I experienced were the uneven network so the students' lack of concern for the teaching and learning process", Not all the students have cellphone/android.



- Informant 2 : uncertain internet signal to support online learning, most of them didn't have mobile phone.
- Informant 3 : There are still students who don't have an Android cellphone or laptop, that not all students' internet networks are stable.
- 2) What are the challenges that you face during the online learning process?
- Informant 1 : The challenge that I face most often is that I have to be willing to explain the explanation 2 or 3 times because there are students who come in and out during the teaching and learning process.
- Informant 2 : The challenges that I experienced were the uneven network, the internet quota that was not always available and the students' lack of concern for the teaching and learning process"
- Informant 3 : Students do not be so serious to the lesson
- 1) What are your solutions to dealing with common online learning problems such as no signal, limited resources, such as laptop computers and cell phone?
- Informant 1 : The solution that I use is that I am willing to go to students who need explanation and/or assignments that cannot be accepted due to media limitations
- Informant 2 : -
- Informant 3 : Train children to be independent. Students can listen to the standard teacher's voice recording repeatedly through the voice recording sent by the teacher
- 2) How do you make learning effective and fun in online learning?
- Informant 1 : What I do, I will invite students to joke while waiting for their friends who haven't joined so they don't get bored right away
- Informant 2 : Sending them the lesson in the form of attractive videos
- Informant 3 : encourages students who are locating to provide information to each other
- 3) How did you apply the strategy to overcome the problems you faced?
- Informant 1 : The strategy I use is that I usually don't focus too much on the learning material so that students can follow the teaching and learning process while doing other activities
- Informant 2 : Support and motivate them and try to present them in interesting learning media
- Then, to know the strategies that used by the English Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong, the writer proposed some questions, namely:

Informan 3 : Teachers do not demand too much from students. limiting materials and assignments  
 So, based on the informants' responses about challenges and strategies that faced by English teacher in online learning can be displayed in the following table.

**Table 1 Teachers' Challenges and Strategies in Online Learning**

No	Teachers' Challenges	Teachers' Strategies
1	Uneven network	Teacher doesn't force the students to have too much
2	Limited facility	Limiting the material and homework
3	Students' learning lost	Motivating and Supporting students
4	Students do not be so serious to the lesson	Inviting student to joke so they don't get bored right away
5	Willing to explain the explanation 2 or 3 times	Trying to present interesting learning process for students

So, based on the table 1 shows that there are five challenges that faced by the teacher during online learning process at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong, namely:

- 1) Uneven network  
 The first challenges faced by the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong was uneven network. In these challenges Most students come from different areas, so not all students' internet networks are stable. This makes some students lose information and not understand the material. This challenge is still similar to the research conducted by Tukan.

Tukan (2020 : 145) state that teachers also have difficulty using the application, and a big problem for teachers is unstable signal/network. So this challenge is still relevant to the challenges found in previous research.

- 2) Limited facility  
 Most students didn't have mobile phones. Because of it, students lost information. The teacher told them so students were in the same area or nearest to each other to give information. A student could use her/his friend's phone to send his/her task. This challenge is still similar to the research conducted by Yusuf. Yusuf Siregar & Amiril Akbar, (2020) one of the challenges is students have limited gadgets/laptops/computers . So this challenge is still relevant to the challenges found in previous research.
- 3) Students' learning lost  
 Student learning lost, signal problems and a lack of facilities made student learning difficult learning process, some students can follow the learning process well, but some students lose it. It concluded that online learning process is less effective because some students don't care and there is a lack of supportive communication tools that support the teaching and learning process. This challenge is a new challenge that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This challenge is a new challenge that is not found in previous research, so this is a novelty in this research.
- 4) Students do not be so serious to the lesson

Fourth, Students are not so serious to the lesson, many students simply remain silent and do not pay attention to their studies as a result of their parents' lack of control that the use of cellphones is not appropriate. Many students become players in games during the teaching and learning process. This challenge is a new challenge that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 sibirongborong in the field. This challenge is a new challenge.

- 5) Willing to explain the explanation 2 or 3 times

Fifth, Willing to explain the explanation two or three times, various challenges faced by the teacher caused the teacher to have to explain the material 2 to 3 times. Due to the unevenness of the network, many people go in and out during the learning process. This challenge is a new challenge that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This challenge is a new challenge that has not been found in previous research, so this is the novelty of this research. This strategy is a new strategy that is not found yet in previous study

Then, table 1 also show 5 strategies that can be conducted by the English Teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong during pandemic covid-19 at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong, namely:

- 1) Teacher doesn't force the students to have too much

The implementation of online learning has limitations such as; the material presented is not channeled properly, limited facilities, network disturbances, and so on. To overcome this problem, teachers can give

students independent assignments related to the material being studied so that they better master the material and when students have problem in connection, teacher encourages students who are in the location to provide information to each other. However, the teacher cannot force students' answers to be perfect. This strategy is a new strategy that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This strategy is a new strategy that is not found yet, so this is the novelty in this research.

- 2) Limiting the material and homework

As a teacher, we should be able to adjust the level of students' ability to receive lessons. Do not pursue the applicable curriculum targets, while students have not been able to accept them. It is different if students have high enough ability and deserve to receive material according to the curriculum. In terms of assignments, teachers should be able to minimize student boredom by doing homework. Do not give too many assignments because the subjects that students study are not only English-related. The more assignments are given to students, the higher the level of student saturation in doing homework will be. This strategy is a new strategy that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This strategy is a new strategy that is not found yet in the previous study.

- 3) Motivating and supporting students.



The online learning process at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong has been running for almost 2 years. As long as the implementation of OL, many new challenges are undergone by teachers and students. In order for OL to run well, teachers must look for new strategies for dealing with these challenges. The strategy used is not far from supporting and motivating students during learning. This can be done by using supportive learning methods during online learning. Provide time and opportunity for students to share about what obstacles they face during online learning. From the results of the sharing, teachers can look for gaps to provide motivation and support to students who are constrained. This strategy is a new strategy that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This strategy is a new strategy that is not found yet by the previous researchers.

- 4) Inviting student to joke so they don't get bored right away. The implementation of online learning causes boredom for students, so that students do not enjoy the teaching OL process. To overcome this, the teacher can relax by joking that invites laughter between lessons. This will allow students to overcome their boredom and return to enjoying the ongoing learning process. This strategy is a new strategy that arises during online learning found at SMA Negeri 1 Siborongborong in the field. This strategy is a new strategy that is not found yet by the previous researchers.

- 5) Trying to present interesting learning process for students Teachers must be creative in choosing various media and learning models that are simple but can attract students' attention. I am looking for a new innovation that supports online learning. When the teaching and learning process takes place online, many students turn off the camera and do other activities outside of learning or students come in and out during the teaching and learning process because of connections are not stable. To overcome this, the teacher must provide a relaxed atmosphere by showing videos related to the material being taught. They can conduct brief discussions between students and teachers and can provide simple, clear, and interesting Power Point slides. This strategy is still similar to the research conducted by Sutarto. Sutarto et al., (2020 : 132) revealed that preparing learning materials that are brief, clear, and easy to understand, interesting, adapted to the media and learning system used. So this strategy is still relevant to the strategy found in previous research.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on finding of the research, the researchers conclude that the teacher faced some challenges and used variety strategies for students in online English learning. Based on research findings there are five challenges and five strategies used by the English teacher in learning English in pandemic situation. The challenges they are: uneven network, limited facility, student learning lost, Students do not so serious to the lesson and willing to explain the explanation two

or three times. The strategies used by the teachers to solve their problems for online teaching learning process such as (1) Teacher doesn't force the students to have too much (2) Limiting the material and homework (3) motivating and supporting (4) Inviting student to joke so they don't get bored right away (5) Trying to present student interesting learning process. So, this paper shown novelty of this research than previous research. Thus, it is hoped that with this research, there will be other research that is the same but with a different school location. The research that the author conducted includes schools in rural areas, and further researchers may conduct research in schools located in urban areas that have a good network and connection with the internet to support the learning process.

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