CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH ONLINE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AT SMK NEGERI 1 BARUMUN KABUPATEN PADANG LAWAS

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Abstract: *Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a type of corona virus that was newly discovered in the city of Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020). As a result, all activities can only be carried out on a limited basis, and places that cause crowds are closed, including schools. So that learning and teaching activities are carried out online or in other words learning from home. The purpose of this research were to find out what challenges faced by teachers and students when learning takes place online, as well as to identify or find out the efforts made by teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun to overcome these challenges. The research method used in this research was descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. The data collection techniques used were interviews and documentation, while the data analysis techniques used were data reduction, data display, and withdrawal and conclusion verification. Based on this research, the results obtained are the challenges faced by English teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun during online teaching are difficulties in increasing students' motivation in learning English, teachers have challenges in choosing appropriate learning strategies, and lack of technology mastery skills. While the challenges faced by students are related to the instability of the internet network in the area they live, limited quotas, and limitations of android as the main online learning facility due to the family's economic instability. Based on these challenges, teachers and school implemented several efforts to overcome these challenges with the aim that learning and teaching activities continue to run smoothly and effectively.*

Key Words: *Covid-19 Pandemic, Online Teaching, Online Learning, English Online, and Challenges.*

TANTANGAN MENGAJAR DAN BELAJAR BAHASA INGGRIS ONLINE SELAMA PANDEMI COVID-19 DI SMK NEGERI 1 BARUMUN KABUPATEN PADANG LAWAS

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Abstrak: Covid-1 merupakan penyakit menular yang disebabkan oleh jenis virus corona yang baru ditemukan di Kota Wuhan, China WHO, 2020). Akibatnya, semua kegiatan hanya bisa dilakukan secara terbatas dan tempat-tempat yang menimbulkan keramaian juga ditutup, termasuk sekolah. Sehingga kegiatan belajar dan mengajar dilakukan secara online atau dengan kata lain belajar dari rumah. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tantangan-tantangan apa saja yang dihadapi guru dan siswa saat pembelajaran berlangsung secara online, serta untuk mengetahui upaya apa saja yang dilakukan oleh guru di SMK Negeri 1 Barumun untuk mengatasi tantangan-tantangan tersebut. Metode penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara dan dokumentasi. Sedangkan teknik analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan dan verifikasi kesimpulan. Berdasarkan penelitian ini, hasil yang diperoleh adalah tantangan yang dihadapi guru Bahasa Inggris di SMK Negeri 1 Barumun selama pengajaran online adalah kesulitan dalam mengingkatkan motivasi siswa dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris, guru memiliki tantangan dalam memilih strategi pembelajaran yang tepat, dan kurangnya kemampuan penguasaan teknologi. Sedangkan tantangan yang dihadapi oleh siswa adalah ketidakstabilan jaringan internet di daerah mereka tinggal, keterbatasan kuota, dan keterbatasan android sebagai sarana utama belajar online akibat ketidakstabilan ekonomi keluarga. Berdasarkan tantangan-tantangan tersebut, guru dan sekolah melakukan beberapa upaya untuk mengatasinya agar kegiatan belajar mengajar tetap berjalan dengan lancer dan efektif.

Kata Kunci: Pandemi Covid-1, Mengajar Online, Belajar Online, Bahasa Inggris Online, dan Tantangan.

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a type of corona virus that was newly discovered in the city of Wuhan, China (WHO, 2020). Since December 2019, the global community has been hit by a pandemic of the Covid-19 virus that was caused changes in social life, including education (Arango, 2020). The spread of this virus occurs so fast that the government has set various regulations aimed at inhibiting its spread. One of the regulations is to apply social / physical comparison. Based on the social / physical distancing policy, places that can cause crowds are closed, one of which is educational institutions. Even though schools are closed, teaching and learning activities are still carried out through distance learning or learning from home by using the online learning media. Related to the policy, interactions between students and teachers occur and take place virtually. Interactions can occur using technological devices such as laptop, computers, or cell phones. Students can now use various online learning applications that have been provided by the government for free or those provided by the private sector by paying.

According to Dabbagh dan Ritland (2005:15) online learning is an open and distributed learning system using educational tools or educational aids made possible through the internet and network-based technology to facilitate the formulation of learning and knowledge processes through meaningful action and interaction. According to Sofyana & Abdul (2019:82) the purpose of the existence of online learning is to provide quality learning services in a network is massive and open to reach enthusiasts of learning space to make it bigger and wider.

In essence online learning is a learning that uses the use of information and communication technology in channelling learning activities between teachers and students. In addition to reducing the spread and transmission of the Covid-19 virus, the use of online learning aims to increase efficiency and effectiveness, transparency and accountability of learning. According to Sanjaya (2020:14) online learning is learning that utilizes technology or internet networks in the learning process. In general, e-learning or online learning systems can be interpreted as learning activities that utilize the internet network as a method of delivering interactions and facilities that are supported by various other forms of learning service.

Learning from home is a challenge for educational institutions. Teachers must work hard in an effort to design technology-based learning materials that have never been implemented before. Muhdi & Nurkholis (2020) state that some of the problems that arise in learning during the pandemic can be divided into three categories, namely: education, technology, and economy. Problems or obstacles related to education include: lack of training, lack of experience, limited time, low mastery of information and communication technology, and lack of parental care in assisting children to learn. While problems or constraints related to technology include: weak signal, and not having a smartphone or Android. The last one is problems / constraints related to the economy, including: job loss, reduced income, increased poverty levels, and fairly high prices for quotas or data packages.

SMK Negeri 1 Barumun is among many schools that are currently implementing an online learning system. The online learning system at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun uses a learning application, namely in the form of Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and Zoom meeting application. In learning English, teachers are required to be able to develop appropriate and innovative learning strategies, which aim to make students able to

capture and understand material well. Teachers are obliged to improve and develop academic qualifications and competencies on an ongoing basis in line with the development of science, technology and arts. For this reason, various learning strategies must always be develop according to the needs of the times. In an emergency like today, there are many challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents when online learning takes place.

Besides the teacher must be able to prepare appropriate learning strategies, teachers also need to prepare appropriate steps to anticipate online learning challenges faced by students. For example, when students do not have online learning tools such as Android, or there is no network available in the area they live in. Teachers are required to be able to prepare appropriate anticipatory steps so that students can participate in learning well. Moreover in this online learning apart from being an educator, the teacher's role is also as a motivator for students so that they are able to participate actively and be more enthusiastic in understanding and especially being able to participate in online English learning effectively.

METHOD

The design of this research was descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. Namely the process of understanding, analysing, explaining, and testing comprehensive, intensive, and detailed about something (Suwendra, 2018). The purpose of this qualitative descriptive research was to describe systematically about the challenges of teaching and learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic and the efforts made by the teachers to overcome these challenges. This research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun which is located at Karya Pembangunan Street No. 07, Pasar Sibuhuan, Barumun, Padang Lawas Regency, North Sumatra.

The instruments that have been used in this research was interview sheet. The interview sheet used as an instrument in conducting interviews with informants in this research. In the preparation of interview instrument, the researcher raised the theory from Nur Millati Aska Sekha Apriliana (2020:17) related to the challenges of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, then the researcher compiled questions based on the theory. Interview guidelines used by researchers are as follows:

Table 1. Grid of interview guidelines with the English teachers and students

No	Variable	Indicators
1.	Challenges of teaching and learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun Kabupaten Padang Lawas	a) Limited packages data/quota b) Lack of understanding of technological science c) Limited network or signal

The data collection techniques used were interviews and documentation. First at the interview stage the researcher interviewed three English teachers and ten students which consists of 2 classes, from class X and XI with different majors at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun as research subjects or respondent in this research. The questions asked at this interview stage were question related to challenges in teaching and learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the interview activities in this research, the

interview stage conducted with the teachers was carried out directly. While the interview with students was carried out using WhatsApp conversations in order to obtain data that can explain the research problem. Second, the documentation of this research was in the form of image data or photos when the research was conducting research activities in the form of observation and interviews with teachers and students. Documentation data with students was in the form of screenshots of WhatsApp conversations because interviews with students were carried out online through WhatsApp conversations.

Analysis of research data was carried out using the analysis model of Miles & Huberman (1994) which consists of three stages, namely (1) Data reduction, reducing was the activity of summarizing and selecting the important things so that the reduced data will give a clear picture. The reduction was part of the analysis; (2) data display, researcher present data that were obtained structured information and provides opportunities and taking action, makes it easier for researcher to take action based on the information that being obtained; (3) Withdrawal and conclusion verification, after the data presentation was completed, the next step the researcher drew conclusions to be able to find out the problems that have been carried out in the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This research has focused on the challenges of teaching and learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Researcher have conducted interviews and documentation to obtain information data from sources. The results of interviews are based on the indicators that have been set in this research.

In the interviews conducted by researcher to obtain data about the challenges in teaching and learning English online during the Covid-19 pandemic at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun, it was found that teachers and students had limitations in interacting directly with one another due to conditions during a pandemic. Based on the interview results of the research it can be concluded that the challenges faced by teachers were in the form of difficulties in motivating students to learn English because students attend Vocational High School so that they think that English was not important to learn because it will not be needed in the world of work, teachers also have difficulty in determining online learning platforms and appropriate teaching strategies, some teachers have difficulty operating technology due to the age factor which was no longer young, teachers experience challenges in assessing students' speaking skills because interaction with students was very limited. Meanwhile, the challenges faced by students included the limitations of internet network or the instability of the internet network in the area where they live, the unavailability of internet quota, and the limited ability of students to operate online learning applications such as Google Classroom because it was rarely used.

With these challenges, teachers and school have implemented several solutions to minimize these challenges. Some steps taken were that the teachers always provided motivation and educating advice to students so that they have better learning motivation, the teachers prepared strategies or learning methods that were more interesting. The school also prepared a solution in the form of providing English language lessons at school twice a week with limited students to help increase students'

enthusiasm in learning English online. Meanwhile, to support the availability of online learning facilities, school provide internet quota assistance for teachers and students.

The results of this research are related to the opinion of Huang et al. (2020: 2) which states that the main challenges of online learning during the pandemic. First, teachers have very limited time to prepare and / or adapt face-to-face learning materials for online learning. Second, in the online learning process, teachers and students do not have the opportunity to interact directly and freely, and there are limited opportunities that will cause the learning process to stop. Third, the use of effective teaching methods requires more effort to motivate and activate students' online learning. In the implementation of online learning, teachers are required to have creativity and innovation to carry out this online learning process starting from media, learning materials, and method so that online learning can continue to teach students although limited by distance. It is the same with teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun who must always prepare the right strategies and ways of teaching online or in other words, in this online learning the teacher acts as a driver who must have great abilities to carry out this online learning. The findings of this research are closely related to the opinion of Aulia Annisa (2021:6) who states that in this pandemic period, teachers have their own challenges, teachers must carry out a dual role, namely as movers and coaches who have extraordinary abilities to carry out distance learning.

Another finding regarding this research is that there are many learning challenges faced by students in the form of limited data packages or quotas owned by students, the inability of students to master online learning applications and the implementations of students' internet networks. This is related to the opinion of Nur Millati Aska Sekha Apriliana (2020: 17) the problems or constraints that affect online learning are limited packages data / quota, lack of understanding of technological science, and limited network or signal.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Based on this research, the results obtained are the challenges faced by English teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Barumun during online teaching are difficulties in increasing students' motivation in learning English, teachers have challenges in choosing appropriate learning strategies, and lack of technology mastery skills. While the challenges faced by students are related to the instability of the internet network in the area they live, limited quotas, and limitations of android as the main online learning due to the family's economic instability. Based on these challenges, teachers and school implemented several efforts to overcome these challenges with the aim that learning and teaching activities continue to run smoothly and effectively even though they take place online.

Recommendation

In an effort to deal with the challenges faced by both of teachers and students during online learning, schools need to improve the quality of facilities and infrastructure. For example, to improve the quality and capacity of teachers, school also need to conduct training in the use of science and technology in the context of online learning. In this online learning must be carried out properly and does not always give students only assignments, but must be accompanied by learning materials using interesting strategies so that students can easily understand the materials. In addition, the effort to make lesson plans by involving students is also one step to increase student learning motivation. Because by making learning plans with the wishes and conditions of students, learning it is felt that it will be more accepted by students and run with fun because it is in accordance with the wishes of students.

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