Investigating Teachers' Strategies in Applying Online Teaching Platforms to Teach English During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In early 2020, face-to-face learning has been shifted to online learning caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the online teaching platform used by English teachers and their strategies to attract students' active participation. The researcher chose a case study as the research design. Meanwhile, the data were collected by interviewing four English teachers and validated by conducting interviews with four students from each teacher and observing the online class activities. Then, the data collected was analyzed using the theory of Miles and Huberman (1994). The result showed applications that teachers used to teach online classes. In addition, they had some teaching strategies that focused more on how the teacher attracted the students to participate in the class actively. However, teachers still needed to develop teaching strategies that focus on the active participation of students and their learning goals.

Keywords: Online teaching platforms, teaching strategies, online learning.

Introduction

In early 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced an outbreak of a disease originating in Wuhan, China, namely the Corona disease outbreak (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). In early March, the Indonesian government announced the first case of Coronavirus or Covid-19. As for the education sector, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia required face-to-face learning to transform into online learning (Kemdikbud, 2020). According to Pal & Vanijja (2020), the Covid-19 pandemic has affected all learning institutions, including kindergartens, schools, and colleges. Teachers need tools or platforms to send information, assign assignments, and communicate with students and parents. So, teacher and students may still carry out their learning activities the same as in the regular classroom. According to Chang & Fang (2020), teachers had to learn new educational technologies, change the concept of education and teaching, change the teaching habits in the face-to-face classroom, and change teaching strategies and methods. Teachers believe that the new teaching strategies will help learners engage in critical thinking during the online learning process (Wang & Torrisi-Steele, 2015). Therefore, teachers need to implement new teaching strategies to utilize technology and motivate students to participate actively in the online learning process.

Some researchers have investigated teachers' strategies and the implementation of online teaching platforms in long-distance learning. Some research by Yang (2017); Muir, Douglas, & Trimble (2020); Payne (2020); gained the conclusion that online

teaching strategies include instructional strategies, discussion boards, and blended online teaching and learning strategies. Those strategies help teachers to facilitate the students in utilizing digital learning tools and following online learning activities. Also, some other studies (e.g., Osman, 2020; Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020) concluded that implementing online teaching platforms supports teachers in creating their virtual classroom the same as it is done in the regular classroom. Teachers may design their online learning activities and keep connected with their students. However, just a few previous studies explored teaching strategies in online English language learning for Senior High School. Therefore, the present researcher is interested in researching online teaching platforms applied by English teachers and why the teachers selected the platforms. Also, the researcher would explore the teaching strategy used in applying the online platform selected to attract students' active participation in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the research questions are: (1) What online platforms do the teachers use during online teaching? (2) Why do the teachers select the platforms? (3) How do the teachers apply the online teaching strategies by using the selected online platform in the teaching process?

Literature Review

Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of 2020, the coronavirus (Covid-19) has spread to almost all corners of the world. On March 24, UNESCO announced that the pandemic affected 1.37 a billion students and 60.2 million teachers in 138 countries (UNESCO, 2020). In Indonesia, the Covid-19 virus has been spread to Java Island since March 2020 (Wikipedia, 2020). Due to the increasing number of people who Covid-19 infects, the Indonesian government has implemented "large-scale social restrictions" since March 2020. Therefore, schools and universities are closed indefinitely, and the learning process is carried out through an online platform. According to Basilaia et al. (2020), the needs of online platforms to conduct learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic are: (1) connecting with the teacher and at least 40 to 50 students through video conferencing platform; (2) online discussions; (3) good internet connections; (4) accessible online activities on mobile phones or laptops; (5) watching learning videos; (6) feedback and assignment.

In Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) prepares and develops distance learning applications based on android called "portal Rumah Belajar" (Kemdikbud, 2020). Teachers and students can access this portal at learning.kemdikbud.go.id. They also can access learning resources, digital classes, virtual laboratories, and question banks. Also, the teacher can communicate interactively regarding the students' topics after explaining the material (Mardiah, 2020). Online platforms help teachers teach the students at any time and in any part of the world even though they do not meet face to face in the classroom. In conclusion, the change of face-to-face classrooms into online learning made teachers find a new set of challenges while conducting the class directly via online teaching platforms such as Google, Quipper, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, etc.

Teaching Strategy in Online Language Learning

The teaching strategy is chosen to deliver the subject matter in a particular learning environment. Djamarah & Zain (2006) stated a teaching strategy is a teacher's plan in the teaching and learning process to achieve the learning purpose which has been planned. It also can be defined as an approach. In online teaching and learning, teachers and students need technology and internet connection to enhance learning the same as in the face-to-face classroom (Fitria, 2020). Teachers may design the online learning activities in chat conversations, online discussions, podcasts, webcasts, etc.

Watson et al. (2017) conducted a study about instructional strategies, and they found Top Ten Instructional Strategies ranked from highest to lowest. Those teaching strategies are 1) be available and responsive to a student; 2) engage and interact with students; 3) provide prompt feedback; 4) foster interaction and communication among students and instructor; 5) provide expectations; 6) provide learning guidance; 7) organize a course; 8) provide meaningful coursework; 9) provide meaningful coursework; 10) use various instructional methods.

Review Of Previous Research Findings

Most previous studies have shown that learning from home significantly affected the education system. Some researchers found that all countries worldwide faced the same challenges during the pandemic, especially education. So, almost all countries switch the normal classroom to online classrooms. Therefore, the teachers need to apply online teaching platforms and new online teaching strategies to help the students to get their opportunity to learn and involve their active participation during the learning activities.

To start with, Osman (2020) explained that online learning under Covid-19 has changed the learning landscape in schools and higher education institutions. However, this must keep students connected to the learning process. So, several schools, such as private schools and international schools, have implemented several platforms such as Google Classrooms, Schoology, Seesaw, Blackboard, and Moodle. Another study by Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020) found a new way to use Google G Suite for education easily and added it to the school management system for video conferencing. Teachers could enter the classroom in their designed virtual classroom at their specified time, and then each classroom's link was sent to parents/students via the internal learning management system. Then, as a result, during the first week of online teaching, none of the lessons have failed or been canceled.

According to Payne (2020), several learning activities are more effective in the online system, especially for students who are less comfortable making and making mistakes in front of their classmates. In his study, there were several practical uses of digital learning tools and online language instructional strategy, such as sequence activities, video conferencing, creating mini-lectures, grammar instruction, avoiding explicit error correction during text chat sessions, and teacher and students participating in online discussion forums. Yang (2017) showed that almost all instructional strategies in online learning are helpful. The most effective instructional strategies are based on all participants' opinions, case studies, video demonstrations, instructor's notes, mini-projects, and discussion forums. This design aligns course objectives and assessment,

consistent module structure, a wide range of assignments, and learning. Also, Muir et al. (2020) reported the involvement of students in online learning and the effect of implementing a set of different teaching strategies. Then, they found that discussion boards were influential in facilitating online student engagement with learning content and with teachers and other students.

Most of the studies above discussed the issues about analyzing online teaching strategies during the pandemic. Some studies focused on adapting online learning, online learning activities, online platforms, and teaching strategies. Some information has been obtained from previous research on online teaching platforms and the teaching strategy during online learning. However, just a few research studies were conducted about teaching strategies in applying online teaching platforms to teach English for Senior High School. So, the present researcher is interested in conducting a study regarding online platforms applied by English teachers and the strategy used in applying the online platform to attract students' active participation during online learning.

Research Design

The researcher used a qualitative case study as the research design. The goal of the case study is to describe and understand in detail the case studies discussed (Ary et al., 2010). This research explored teachers' online teaching platforms and strategies to attract students' active participation during online English learning. The researcher chose four English teachers who teach a high school in the Jember district.

Then, the data was collected by interviewing the English teachers. The researcher used semi-structured to encourage the participants to give deeper information, and the participants were more easily giving the reasons for their answers during the interview. Also, to observe the online learning activities, the researcher made an observation table that includes pre-activity, main activity, and closure in the learning activities.

After gathering the data, the researcher analyzed the findings by implementing Miles and Huberman's (1994) theories. The data collected were reduced by summarizing and paraphrasing the interview transcripts. Then, the researcher decided which collected data should be inserted in tables. Last, the data collected was validated by using triangulation. The researcher validated the data collected by interviewing the students from each teacher and observing the learning activities.

Findings and Discussion

Table 4.1: The online teaching platforms selected by the English teachers.

Teacher	Online Teaching Platforms
Teacher 1 (T1)	a. Google classroom b. Zoom c. WhatsApp
Teacher 2 (T2)	a. Google Classroom b. Zoom
Teacher 3 (T3)	a. Google Classroom b. Zoom

	c. WhatsApp
	d. E-learning
Teacher 4 (T4)	a. Google classroom
	b. Zoom
	c. WhatsApp

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the English teachers used Google Classroom, Zoom, WhatsApp, and E-learning in online learning. Google Classroom is a tool for delivering online content to students, creating interaction, helping teachers give tasks, and conducting online assessments in a secure manner (Gupta & Pathania, 2021). Meanwhile, Zoom was applied to perform the synchronous activity because Zoom provides quality audio, video, and screen sharing, which helps the teacher create an interactive learning environment (Serhan, 2020). So that way, English teachers used a share screen while explaining the material to read the material being presented.

However, WhatsApp only applies when the teachers have to contact their students. Alqahtani et al. (2018) used WhatsApp as a platform and socialization tool. The students would quickly get the teacher by using WhatsApp because most students have used WhatsApp as a communication tool. The teachers also applied E-learning which provides a service where the teacher can create the questions, and students cannot share answers with their friends. Karthika et al. (2019) also explained that implementing the online exam system and policies could prevent students cheating during online exams.

Table 4.2: The reasons why the teachers selected the online platforms

Teacher	Types of Online Learning Platforms	The Reason
T1	a. Google classroom b. Zoom c. WhatsApp	a. Teachers easily monitor students who submit assignments b. Teachers and students can interact virtually with these applications c. Teachers may communicate with students easily
T2	a. Google Classroom b. Zoom	a. The online teaching platforms selected are also widely used by other teachers b. The platforms are also interrelated
T3	a. Google classroom b. Zoom c. WhatsApp d. E-Learning	a. Co-teachers and T3 have decided to use the same because the applications selected are practical. b. Students are more active in practicing speaking English through web conferencing. c. The online platform selected provide

		teachers to give directions, communicate with the students, and give instructions. d. The online platform selected met the teacher's need to conduct an online examination.
T4	a. Google Classroom b. Zoom c. WhatsApp	a. Online teaching platforms selected met teachers' needs in teaching during the pandemic time. b. These online teaching platforms are straightforward to use.

In this study, teachers used Google Classroom and Zoom for almost the same reasons. Many teachers used Google Classroom and Zoom because the applications are easy to use. Both platforms also meet teachers' need to conduct online learning activities. They claimed that Google Classroom is straightforward and practical to use. In Sukmawati & Nensia's (2019) research, teachers applied Google Classroom because it offered teachers to create and organize assignments quickly, provide feedback effectively, and communicate with their classes. The English teacher applied Zoom because teachers need to interact and involve students to be active participants during the online learning. Also, Singh et al. (2020) explained that teachers used Zoom to interact with students during the learning process, share the learning materials and hold online presentations. Also, the use of more than online platforms could be matched. Besides that, various online teaching platforms are a new way to teach online and interact with students during an online class (Kim, 2020).

Several teachers who chose WhatsApp as a platform for teaching also had reasons why they decided on WhatsApp as a platform for communicating with students. Teachers applied WhatsApp to share notes, instructions and communicate with students (Singh et al., 2020). Besides that, another teacher also applied E-learning because the application was more straightforward and better for organizing exams. E-learning as a web-based examination system is an effective way for teachers to prepare for examinations and saves effort and time reviewing tests and producing results reports (Al-aqbi, Al-Taie, & Ibrahim, 2021).

Table 4.3: The procedure of Applying Teaching Strategies through Online Teaching Platforms

Teacher	The Procedure	Teaching Strategies
T1	1. The teacher gave instructions and directions about the preparation before learning the activities begin 2. The teacher sent material in Google Classroom 3. The teacher sent a link for Zoom	1. Involve students' active participation 2. Provide synchronous activity 3. Foster interaction by providing a questioning session and checking students' understanding

	if there was a schedule for a live online classroom on that day 4. The teacher gave instructions to students to turn on the camera during live online class via Zoom 5. The teacher greeted and asked students how they are 6. The teacher checked students' attendance 7. The teacher explained the material 8. The teacher randomly chose one student to read the English text displayed on the share screen menu during the live online classroom. 9. The teacher provided a questioning session so that students may ask some questions, or the teacher may check the students' understanding 10. The teacher sent students' assignments in Google Classroom after explaining the material 11. The teacher gave feedback to students who had submitted the assignments 12. The teacher allowed students to contact him through group chat or private chat on WhatsApp when they get difficulties in understanding the material and do not understand the task instructions given	4. Provide feedback 5. Be A responsive teacher
T2	1. The teacher sent the Zoom link to the captain of class via a private chat on WhatsApp 2. The teacher started live online classroom via Zoom 3. The teacher gave instructions to the students to turn on the camera 4. The teacher checked students' attendance 5. The teacher explained the material	1. Provide synchronous activity 2. Foster interaction with students and provide motivation 3. Provide feedback when the student had submitted their task 4. Provide an opportunity for students to contact the teacher via WhatsApp

	6. The teacher provided opportunities for students to ask questions 7. The teacher checked the students' understanding if no students asked questions 8. The teacher gave motivation 9. The teacher instructed students to summarize the materials that had been explained 10. The teacher sent assignments in Google Classroom after explaining the materials 11. The teacher gave feedback to students 12. The teacher provided opportunities for students who wanted to ask questions outside of class hours through private chat rooms on WhatsApp	
T3	1. The teacher started the class by giving instructions to students to make attendance by mentioning vocabulary in English with a predetermined topic through Google Classroom 2. The teacher sent material in the form of learning videos through Google Classroom 3. The teacher instructed students to study independently 4. The teacher conducted online discussions through the group chat on WhatsApp 5. If there were scheduled for live online classroom via Zoom, the teacher would train the students to speak English and invite them to participate in the learning process more actively 6. If the teacher explained the material in a live online class, the teacher asked questions to determine whether the students understood the material being	1. Use various instructions 2. Provide synchronous activity 3. Foster interaction and communication with students during the online learning process. 4. Held a mini quiz competition. 5. Be a responsive teacher 6. Provided feedback to students

	discussed. 7. The teacher gave assignments 8. The teacher gave feedback when students had finished collecting assignments 9. The teacher allowed students to contact the teacher outside of class hours via private room chat or group chat on WhatsApp	
T4	1. The teacher started the class by asking the students' readiness to follow the online learning activities 2. The teacher checked students' attendance on Google Classroom 3. The teacher sent material in Google Classroom and instructed students to study independently 4. The teacher conducted video conferencing via Zoom when it is needed 5. The teacher had a casual discussion and explained the material that had not been understood during live online class via Zoom 6. The teacher gave assignments through Google Classroom 7. The teacher gave feedback when students had submitted assignments in Google Classroom 8. The teacher contacted students who had problems with attendance and delay in collecting tasks via private room chat on WhatsApp	1. Use various instructions 2. Offer feedback and notes to students 3. Provide synchronous activity 4. Provide online discussion

The data findings found how the teachers applied their teaching strategies using the online teaching platforms selected to attract students' active participation. The first strategy is providing synchronous sessions. First, all English teachers were to hold video conferencing to teach virtually. Some teachers hold video conferencing via Zoom and Google Meet, so they might interact with students and explain material almost the same as face-to-face learning (Lestiyanawati and Widyantoro, 2020). The teachers also applied various instructions while teaching online. At the beginning of class, the teacher started by giving instructions. In the research by Watson et al. (2017), it was said that

the use of several instructional facilities and technological tools could help students to complete the coursework.

All teachers fostered interaction and communication, such as providing questioning sessions and casual discussion. Random questioning activities are conducive to the active participation of all students, which increases the concentration of classmates and the class atmosphere (Yen, 2020). Besides that, Fahara and Castro (2015) explained that teachers tried to be empathetic, greeted students, asked about their details such as their health, and treated online interactions as if they were happening in a real classroom. Also, the teacher fostered communication with students who used to skip the class and were always late to submit the task. Efriana (2021) that EFL teachers could also proactively contact students who are less active in online learning and personally contact the parents of these students.

Furthermore, one of the teachers also had another strategy to involve students' participation during the live online classroom. The teacher asked the students to read examples of English text after explaining the material using the share screen menu on Zoom. Similarly, Fahara and Castro (2015) stated that the teacher asked students to give examples or explanations to be more involved and actively participate in in-class activities. Meanwhile, the other one implemented a mini-quiz game by using Zoom. Implementing the concept of gamification during online learning might improve students' participation in the game (Jonathan and Recard, 2021).

The following strategy is being a responsive teacher when getting contacted by students. Watson et al. (2017) said that teachers could schedule where students can contact the teacher, and the teacher replies to students' messages or e-mails soon. Also, teachers provided feedback and motivation to study. The teachers should provide students with feedback, guide students in gaining their confidence, and motivate them to achieve their learning goals in online learning (Watson et al., 2017)

With unplanned online learning, teachers are required to develop a new strategy so that their students can adapt to online learning. In addition, teachers must continue to make students actively participate during learning activities so that learning objectives are achieved. However, in this pandemic period, teachers are preparing more strategies to keep students attending and participating in learning activities. The teachers focus more on how their students can attend and join the learning activities, so they are expected to submit their tasks on time and not skip the class.

Pedagogical Implication

The result of the study will be relevant theoretically and practically to students, teachers, and future researchers as follows:

Theoretically, the findings of this study will contribute to the implementation of online teaching platforms in online teaching and learning. It is also expected to know the teaching strategies using the online platforms selected during the learning activities.

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be helpful for the English teacher as the source of information about the strategy and the use of online teaching platforms during an online classroom. The finding will be helpful for future researchers to conduct further research on the same topic, but the research may be in different designs, settings, or research subjects.

Conclusion and Suggestion

In online learning, teachers had teaching strategies to attract students' active participation in learning activities. In this study, the teacher held a synchronous session using zoom so that students could meet virtually with the teacher. In addition, during video conferencing, the teachers provided a question session and invited students to participate by asking them to read the text shown by the teacher on the share screen menu. Besides that, they provided motivation and used various instructions. They also occasionally invited students to play mini-games so that students could actively speak in English. With WhatsApp, teachers also gave opportunities for students who want to consult outside of class hours to send messages. Then, the teachers also provided feedback on student assignments through the comments column on Google Classroom.

This study reveals teaching strategies to attract students' active participation in online learning, and the online platforms teachers apply when teaching online. Therefore, teachers are expected to develop teaching strategies focusing on students' active participation and learning goals. Future studies are intended for other researchers to explore the constraints experienced by teachers or students when learning online using online platforms. Also, future researchers can explore teacher teaching strategies to not only focus on students' active participation but also focus on teachers' tricks to help students reach the learning goals.

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