

NARRATIVES OF TEACHING ONLINE ENGLISH CLASSES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLING SECTORS: INSIGHTS FROM TWO ENGLISH TEACHERS

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Abstract

Research into EFL teachers' stories during teaching has been extensively carried out. However, little is known about EFL teachers' stories in the elementary schooling sector. This study aims to investigate the experiences of elementary school teachers in the online English learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. The method used is narrative inquiry. Data were obtained through structured interviews with two teacher participants and analyzed using thematic analysis. The results obtained from the analysis revealed three themes in the stories conveyed by the two teachers: teacher inclusive experience, teacher challenges, and teacher coping strategies. The implications of the results of this study are discussed at the end of the article.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Elementary School, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Teacher Narrative*

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on the education sector across the world. It forced the educational system to shift from face-to-face to online which is widely known as an online academic year or fully online learning (Morris et al., 2020). The enforcement of this social distancing rule to mitigate the spread of the pandemic has also influenced the way children learn and interact socially. One major shift is the tremendous digitalization/virtualization of teaching and learning activities which have significantly reshaped the learning experiences and communicative practices of students in various contexts. (Chan et al., 2021). While substantial research has shown digital technologies and online networks can bring various benefits to education, the abrupt, largely passive switch to the online (or at least blended) mode of education due to the pandemic has resulted in or foregrounded many issues such as unequal access to the internet or digital resources and teachers' and learners' lack of knowledge and skills about how to operate online educational platforms/tools effectively (e.g. Altbach & de Wit, 2020; Chik & Benson, 2020; Obadire et al., 2020).

Consequently, face-to-face teaching and learning processes had to be transformed to suit an e-learning context. In practice, e-teaching and learning activities are being conducted virtually (Wu & McGoogan, 2020). through Google meet classes, or the WhatsApp group, other platforms. Therefore, in Indonesia, currently all schools are conducting online class learning as an alternative method in the pandemic era. Unfortunately, some teachers and students have faced difficulties due to limited training

in online-based teaching and learning (Li et al., 2020). Teachers and students often find it difficult to learn how to operate itonline application. not infrequently before giving new material using videos or other media, teachers must see tutorials on youtube or other social media. various technical problems have occurreduring this process. In addition, the internet support system must also be considered, especially for teachers or students who live outside the reach of internet access in rural, mountainous, and remote areas.remote areas have struggled to join online classes.

The current study examines the experiences of two primary school English teachers' perspectives in teaching during a pandemic through online learning and the challenges during the learning process caused by COVID in 2020–2021. It is based on semi-structured individual interviews that encourage studies to share their ideas and experiences related to learning. It draws on literacy theory (Lankashear & Knoble, 2008; Jones & Hafner, 2012) and Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 1993, 2002) the concept of habitus and capital in describing how this group of students adapts to 'new' ways of learning and normal communication by transferring or re-developing various awareness, knowledge, potential and dispositions with strategic use of various digital technologies or media technologies to facilitate learning and social activities in a variety of different settings in this period.

We argue that the findings suggest teachers as facilitators of students can direct and transform learners from their social habits with their learning and communication styles and native strategies and develop more awareness and skills related to digital media affordability situations to address the challenges of this period. We also demonstrate how teachers experience to face big challenges that have never been felt before and this is the first time for teachers and students to transform in an online-based teaching and learning system. Given the aforementioned literature above, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' experiences in the online learning during COVID-19?
2. What challenges do they encounter during the teaching and learning process?
3. How do they deal with such challenges?

METHOD

Design

This research was conducted by focusing on the experiences of two elementary school English teachers online during the covid 19 pandemic. In this study, we conducted a qualitative research with a narrative investigation. The reason the researcher uses this design is to obtain the quantity of data where the researcher needs to dig up more information about the object. This design is considered more structured than using quantitative research andanalyzed using thematic analysis. The narrative approach is an effort to reconceptualize professional knowledge. Which allows reconceptualization, based on the assertion that online teaching experiences can be found and narratively through interviews of individual experiences in specific and concrete contexts.

Data Collection

For data collection, it was obtained from the results of face-to-face individualism interviews which were recorded using a smartphone. interviewees were given 6 questions for 40 - 50 minutes. For resource questions, the researcher deliberately uses Indonesian to minimize misunderstandings and to broaden understanding of the phenomenon being studied. During the interview asked resource persons about the weaknesses and strengths of online class learning, often encountered when Teaching online classes, What are the ways to make online classes effective? How are the outputs of online class learning lastly we asked students' responses when they first did online classes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis we used thematic coding by grouping the results of interviews according to research questions then the results of the transcripts of data from the two sources were compared to identify similarities and differences.

FINDINGS

Teachers' experience in the online teaching

Online learning is an open and distributed learning system using pedagogical tools (educational aids), which is made possible through the internet and network-based technology to facilitate the formation of the learning process and knowledge. However, not a few teachers admitted that they were not ready for online learning as well as parents who claimed to be quite overwhelmed by the online learning. As stated by the two sources in the interview:

"At first the teacher and I were quite surprised by the government's decision to require online learning because we had never had online teaching experience before, but like it or not, we have to be professional and follow existing developments and are forced to do everything we can. can support online learning."

"Online learning is quite difficult for teachers, students and even parents. Because at first I never studied online. But what can we do if our government's decision must be obeyed. Although it is still not effective when this learning is done online and the effect of this online learning will actually make students more addicted to gadgets".

From the results of the interviews above, it shows that teachers feel surprised and difficulties in teaching are also felt by students and parents. Therefore, it is important for the government to provide training or seminars for teachers, students and parents to support the effectiveness of online classes.

Challenges encountered by teachers in the online teaching

Thus far, people only know the face-to-face learning process. The online learning process is still very rare in Indonesia, so the change in the face-to-face learning system to online makes many parties have to adapt to digital technology immediately.

The use of digital technology that must be studied starts from hardware hardware to software or applications. Many parties such as teachers to students who do not really understand running certain features in the software so that learning is not optimal. This is evidenced in the results of our interviews with 2 participants:

"The problem faced when taking online classes is when using Google Meet, it turns out that the child "hasn't been able to use the application properly, so they sometimes come back to what was originally called a child." They don't know the right time to talk and when to be quiet That's why they didn't turn off the microphone so that all the sound came in and the material I conveyed was not optimal even though I was warned to turn off the microphone."

"The problem is more with the material, when we give material to students it is still lacking for understanding in understanding the material through online. In addition, regarding the use of the zoom meeting application so that we form a team with the homeroom teacher to realize the use of the application for students accompanied by their guardians, it turns out that they are still experiencing difficulties."

From the results of the research above, it can be concluded that the difficulty of teachers to convey material to students is the main factor is age and lack of knowledge

Coping strategies enacted by the teachers

The online learning system (on the network) is a learning system without face to face directly between teachers and students but is carried out online using the internet network. Teachers must ensure that teaching and learning activities continue, even though students are at home. There are several strategies including teachers are required to be able to design learning media as an innovation by utilizing online media (online).

For more than sixteen months, students have been forced to carry out online learning due to the corona pandemic. With this pandemic, some students complain because they feel online learning is less effective. Many distractions that make their learning process is not optimal. This was said by two participants during the interview:

"The problem faced when online classes are when using learning applications, it turns out that many students still don't understand how to use them, but there are several ways that I did, the first was sending learning videos for children" as an introduction after giving the video I will continue to give assignments and most importantly the participation of parents"

“When online learning is implemented properly, it will be very effective, but we can see for ourselves with the condition of human resources (HR) with current technological capacities. We still find it difficult to deny that our participants are elementary grade students. So maybe it can be implemented but for a higher level, for example SMA or SMP. Moreover, for the first grade at the elementary level, at least we can maximize the material given to it more minimally. We prioritize the more things. We also provide assistance, especially for our assignments, indeed asking parents for help, especially for doing questions.”

Even though online classes have many shortcomings, teachers are always required to solve problems and are required to think critically, teachers must also look for alternatives to the ineffectiveness of online classes, the way teachers provide alternatives to support effectiveness is considered sufficient.

DISCUSSION

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the global education system is affected and the near-total closure of educational institutions. This closing increased at home online learning and made a significant distribution both for students and educators. Most educational institutions must shift education from traditional to online. Online classes are becoming a new informal space in the world of education. The teachers have provided authentic insights into the development of this educational practice. In this study, we suggest exploring the effects and provisions in the long-term development and for the effectiveness of the technological tools used, considering the findings of our study, namely the "challenge" of problems faced by teachers, one of which is technology. It is possible that there will be a new outbreak that requires the holding of online classes again. With online classes, we can learn in the midst of a virus outbreak that is rampant. Although many obstacles or obstacles were faced, they did not dampen the enthusiasm of students to receive education in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Negative aspects of online learning are distractions and a reduction in focus, workload, technology and the Internet connectivity, and inadequate support. With the online class the teacher's burden feels heavier where the teacher also needs the help of parents to support student learning. This finding is not in accordance with findings by (Hussein et al., 2020) because they found workloads with online learning remains the same as traditional learning. These results also show that online learning leads to drastic changes in the education system because educational institutions, students, teachers and even parents are not sufficiently prepared for this new thing.

CONCLUSION

So for our survey findings it is very important because we look at two perspectives from direct English teaching teachers and find some findings such as experiences, challenges and strategies. to date there are only a few studies that analyze the teacher's

perspective on online learning. Therefore this research is important to fill the gap and for future research such as:

1. Provide training to student teachers and guardians on the use of increasingly sophisticated technology
2. Expand surveys to educators and conduct a global study on the impact of the pandemic

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