

# Teacher Strategies in Teaching English during the Pandemic at One of the Islamic Secondary Schools in Jambi

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Online Platforms, Teacher Strategy, WhatsApp, Islamic schools</i></p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.22437/langue.v2i2.29331">http://dx.doi.org/10.22437/langue.v2i2.29331</a></p> <p><b>Received:</b> November 14, 2023</p> <p><b>Reviewed:</b> November 29, 2023</p> <p><b>Accepted:</b> December 17, 2023</p>	<p><i>In this research, researchers explore the teachers' strategies in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic at one of the Islamic secondary schools in a suburban area in Jambi. In conducting the research, researchers employed a qualitative research design with a case study method. The interview was conducted to investigate teachers' strategies during the irregular educational environment as the effect of the global pandemic. Based on the research findings, teachers often used strategies in English learning classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and utilized video as the learning media. Teachers use these strategies because it is more exciting and easier for students to understand the learning material. Teachers sometimes use several other strategies that are less efficient for online learning.</i></p>

## 1. Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak has spread rapidly worldwide, affecting human life, including the education system. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the educational system in Indonesia. Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim instructed the implementing of online classrooms in the face of the COVID-19 outbreak. It makes all activities of the teaching and learning process change from face-to-face in the classroom to online classroom. In Indonesian education, English is included in our curriculum. Students need to pass an English course as a requirement to graduate from their school. It means that learning English as a foreign language is very important, especially in education.

In educating students, teachers play an essential role in learning. Teachers in interactive teaching must have pedagogic and teaching skills, and they can be researchers, educators, innovators, and consultants to the students. It means the teacher is the organizer and teaching partner when communicating with students.

Teachers need a strategy for teaching the students. The teacher's strategy is to build up the class practice of teachers, such as teaching methods, student discipline, and student

evaluations. Teachers must be creative and use effective strategies in choosing material for students. Therefore, teachers must be able to stimulate student interest in learning, especially in online learning systems. With several strategies, learning becomes more manageable, faster, independent, effective, interesting, and easier to adapt to new situations.

This is a challenge for all teachers, especially English teachers, in dealing with the learning process in the pandemic era, with media as an essential part. There are four skills in the language, which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. According to Richard & Schmidt (2002), skills in language teaching are the mode or way in which the language is used. Meanwhile, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the interactions that should be carried out directly between students and teachers and between students have become very limited. Teachers and students need to face this change to continue the learning process.

Moreover, the success of online learning systems is highly dependent on several integrated components between students, lecturers, learning resources, and existing technology (Mustofa et al., 2019). The results of Firman & Rahayu (2020) showed that: (1) students already had the essential facilities needed to take part in online learning; (2) online learning was flexible in its implementation and able to encourage the emergence of learning independence and motivation to be more active in learning; (3) distance learning encouraged the emergence of social distancing behaviour and minimized the emergence of crowds to reduce the potential for the spread of Covid-19 in the campus environment.

The previous section recognizes the main problem that online education cannot be equally applied in all parts of Indonesia. To deal with these issues, several teachers have taken the initiative to come to their students' homes and carry out the learning process in groups with a maximum of five students (Taufiqurrahman, 2020). These teachers agreed that online learning at their places did not go smoothly. They often face this because many students do not have smartphones or other required gadgets. They also had difficulty controlling the activities of students since they did not have classroom interaction (Wahyono et al., 2020).

The teachers inevitably have to apply and adapt to e-learning classes in conveying English material from listening, speaking, reading, and writing so that the teaching and learning process can continue. According to Abbad et al. (2009:398), e-learning refers to using information and communication technologies to enable access to online learning or teaching resources. A teacher confessed that she experienced a little difficulty in implementing e-learning classes because she rarely used them. The teacher must directly apply it within a short time and without training. Of course, the teacher requires adaptation and a strategy to teach English. From the explanation, the researchers found out the case in this school and are interested in doing research.

With this background, researchers are interested in researching teacher strategies that teachers implemented in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online learning makes it difficult to supervise online learning, which will be a tough challenge for a teacher. Therefore, the researchers became curious and tried to investigate this with research entitled 'Suburb MTS Teacher Strategies during the Pandemic in Teaching English in one of Secondary Schools in Jambi.'

## **2. Literature Review**

The strategy is included in the realm of learning design, in the study of educational technology. Teaching strategies refer to the teacher's use of technique, structure, method, system, procedures, and processes during instructions. Brown (2000) writes that strategies are specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, and planned designs for controlling and manipulating specific information.

Meanwhile, Djamarah and Zain (1997:5) explain that there are four basic strategies in learning activities that include identifying and determining the specifications and qualifications of students' behaviour and personality changes as expected. Next, teachers should choose a teaching and learning approach system based on people's aspirations and views of life. Teachers are also suggested to choose and determine the procedures, methods, and learning techniques that are considered the most appropriate and effective so that they can be used as a guide by the teachers in carrying out their teaching activities.

The last strategy is establishing norms and minimum limits of success or criteria and standards of success so that the teachers can use it as a guide in conducting and evaluating the results of teaching and learning activities, which will then be used as feedback to improve learning. According to Picard (2004), strategies are specific suggestions for gaining knowledge about and practising teaching skills, and various activities are included. There are many kinds of teaching strategies that can be used by the teacher when preparing students and setting their goals in the learning process. A particular strategy may be modified to suit the needs of the principal and the teacher.

Online learning is the newest and most popular form of distance education today. It has significantly impacted postsecondary education in the past decade, and the trend is only increasing. According to Dhull & Sakshi (2017), "online learning encompasses a range of technologies such as the world wide web, email, chat, new groups and texts, audio and video conferencing delivered over computer networks to impart education". Besides that, Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guardia, and Koole (2020) also defined the term 'online learning' as widely used but with various meanings. For the purposes of this article, online learning refers to learning that is mediated by the Internet. It helps learners learn at their own pace, according to their convenience. Online Education requires a great deal of resources and careful planning.

This online learning has advantages and disadvantages, as Dhull and Sakshi (2017) stated. The advantages of applying this online learning are accessibility, personalized learning, developing cognitive abilities, cost-effectiveness, promoting research, basic computer skills, equal opportunity to all, self-pacing, and globalization. Online learning also has disadvantages, like poor communication, isolation, lack of motivation, lack of funds, lack of quality, and poor accessibility in remote areas. Furthermore, Parkes (2014) also revealed that online courses often lack face-to-face interaction, peer interaction, faculty feedback and the lack of community. Moreover, Gilbert (2015) explained that "online courses offer an excellent way for students to broaden their educational opportunities and stay competitive in the ever-demanding realm of education. Students embarking on the path of higher education through online coursework need to be self-motivated, independent, and responsible learners".

Furthermore, in online teaching and learning, there are several kinds of online learning that can be applied to the teaching in explaining the material. Those are Knowledgebase, online support, asynchronous training, synchronous training, and hybrid training. Knowledgebase type is a set of lessons published on the website with general learning instructions that a student must follow, with no support available. The online support type is a modified version of the knowledge base, where support is available, so there is a discussion board, web forum or another communication way available to get support on some topics. Asynchronous training is the one where the lessons do not take place in real time, but the students are provided with content regularly. Instructors are assigned and provide support through email or other communication platforms. Synchronous training is done in real time with a live instructor and optional moderator. There is a pre-set time to log in to the online education environment, and

participants can communicate directly with the teacher and other group members. Hybrid training combines online and in-person interaction (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

There are some previous studies already conducted about teacher strategies. The first relevant study was done by Rusandi (2021), "An analysis of teachers' strategies in teaching speaking English in online learning class at SMP N 7 Muaro Jambi". This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design. The study's finding shows that there are some strategies in speaking English on online learning used by the English teacher. The strategies include storytelling, dialogue, giving opinions/ideas, and the last is singing a song. Then, the second study was done by Adam Dwi Cahyo (2021), entitled "Teachers' strategies in teaching speaking through online learning at eleventh grade in SMKN 3 Kota Jambi". This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design. The study's finding shows that there are two different strategies between two English teachers as a participant. The difference in the strategies used by participant 1 is only in prepared lectures, while participant 2 has variations in strategies such as debate, brainstorming, and prepared talks. The last study is by Dewi Astutika (2020), entitled "Teacher's Strategies in Teaching English using E-learning Class during Covid-19 Pandemic at MAN 3 Tulungagung". This study uses descriptive qualitative research. This study found that the strategy used by the English teacher is the independent teaching strategy. There are similarities between previous studies and this study, namely, finding the teaching strategies used in teaching English.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The writers used descriptive qualitative research focusing on teacher strategies in English e-learning classes in this research. One of the reasons for using it is the experience of researchers where research on a qualitative approach to this method can be used to find and understand what is hidden behind a phenomenon which is difficult to grasp satisfactorily. This type of research was inductive, where data at the location would be the primary source of the phenomenon and problems in the observation process. This research aims to discover the strategies teachers use in English learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the researcher wants to know the problems teachers face during the COVID-19 pandemic. Then this research only focuses on analyzing teacher strategies.

#### **3.2 Participants**

In this research, one English teacher agreed to participate in the study. She teaches English at MTSN 1 Kota Jambi. This research was conducted at MTSN 1 Kota Jambi, located at K.H Hasan Anang Olak Kemang, Danau Teluk. This school is under the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. The researchers chose MTSN 1 Kota Jambi because this school implemented online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **3.3 Instruments**

Interviews or question-and-answer sessions are one of the best ways to learn or explore profound information from someone. An interview is a conversation that aims to gather information in a description of the life of the person being interviewed in connection with the interpretation of the meaning of the 'described phenomena' (Kvale, 1996, p. 174). Furthermore, Schostak (2006:54) adds that interviews are extended conversations to get in-depth information about a particular topic or subject, through which phenomena can occur and be interpreted in the sense of meaning carried by the person being interviewed. In this case, the interview was

conducted after implementing the new normal at school by face-to-face and online interviews. The interview design and the questions' expression will affect the subject's depth and freedom in response. Several interviews encourage long and detailed reports, while others are designed to obtain a short and specific response. Provide a description of the study's instruments, detailing what they are, how they were used, and with whom they were employed. In this research, the researchers conducted an audit trail to maintain the truth and objectivity of the research results. An audit trail examines data to ensure that the reported things are true and can be traced or followed. To establish confirmability in this study, the researchers provided descriptive characteristics of the respondents, methods, and techniques used in the study. All tape-recorded interviews and transcribed notes were kept for an audit trail.

In the interview process, the researchers used the interview guide to interview the participant. The purpose of using interview guidelines is to facilitate the interview process of the researchers. Then the researcher also used other tools, such as a voice recorder from a handphone, which was designed to record all conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee. Using interview tools and a voice recorder helped the researchers collect and remember the answers given by the participant.

### **3.4 Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis in qualitative research is often carried out simultaneously or together with data collection. Then, Sirajuddin (2020) stated that the data analysis in this study included several steps or stages; Data reduction, data display, and making conclusions or interpretations. Reducing data means summarizing, choosing the main thing, focusing on the important things, and seeking themes and patterns. Thus, the reduced data will provide a clearer view, and make it easier for researchers to conduct further data collection and look for it if necessary. Data reduction can be assisted with equipment, such as computers, notebooks, etc. In reducing data, the researcher has been guided by the objectives to be achieved. In this stage, the researcher obtained data from interviews with the teacher, showing the teachers' strategies for English online learning classes. The required data is entered in this step, while irrelevant data is not used.

According to Miles and Huberman (2014), the most frequently used to present data in qualitative research is with narrative text. The presentation of data has made it easier to understand what is happening and plan the following work based on what has been done. In this study, the researcher displayed data using an essay. This is the most used display in qualitative research.

The conclusion is the final stage in data analysis. The conclusion in qualitative research is new findings that have never existed. Findings can be in the form of a description or description of an object before still dim or even dark, so after being investigated becomes clear. This conclusion can be either a causal relationship or an interactive one, as well as a hypothesis or theory. In the conclusion stage, the researcher begins to see and examine all data and then tells the story by making a relationship between the story so that the researcher gets the results and conclusions from the study.

## **4. Findings**

The teacher strategies in the English e-learning class are the results of the interview conducted with English teachers about the strategies used in teaching English e-learning classes

during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this research, the researcher used one participant, an English teacher. The researcher got the data through interviews. The results of this study are described based on the interpretation of the results of the participant interview recordings. Therefore, all the transcribed data were processed and classified by the researcher. After categorizing the data related to the topic, the researcher will explain all the data described as answers to the questions in this study.

According to the data interview transcript, the researcher organized the data and found four main themes and a description of the data provided from the results of the interviews. The four themes are Teacher Problem, Platform, Teacher Solution, and Strategy in Online Learning. From the four main themes that the researcher got, the researcher assembled words from the themes mentioned so that the results of this discussion can answer the research question in this study. The researcher discussed the findings from the interviews and found several problems faced by the participants during online learning. The problems were (1) the teacher and student readiness, (2) not optimal in using the media, (3) the internet facility and (4) student scores. The biggest problem faced by the participants from this study is the student economics factor. Some students do not have the facilities to do online learning. These problems are related to each other and affect students' school grades.

In the second theme, the platform that the teacher used to run an online learning system, the teacher used WhatsApp and Zoom to deliver the learning material, but the teacher often uses WhatsApp because it is more flexible and cheaper from any aspect for the student.

The third theme was about teacher solutions. The online learning situation makes the teacher, as a participant in this study, play a role in problem-solving. In this case, teachers have two solutions to these problems. The first is using WhatsApp as a learning media platform because it is cheaper and more flexible for solving student use, and the second is for student scores. The teacher helps the student get a score by asking the student to come to school (within the group) and do a task together. Students still understand the learning material by learning together, so the student still gets knowledge from the teacher.

The last theme that the researcher found is the strategy of online learning. In the results of this research, the researchers found that the strategy used by the teacher during online learning was using video as a strategy. The reason for using the video is that the students were more interested when they could watch the learning material, and for the duration of the video, it was a short video.

## **5. Discussion**

In the research discussion, the researcher analyzed and assembled the data collected in the research findings. In this case, the researcher assembled words from the themes mentioned so that the results of this discussion can answer the research question in this study.

### **5.1 Teacher Problem**

The researcher discussed the findings from the interviews and found several problems faced by the participants during online learning. The problems were the teacher and student readiness, not optimal in using the media, internet facility, and student scores. From the interview, the biggest problem faced by the participants from this study is the student economics factor. Some students do not have the facilities to do online learning. These problems are related to each other and affect students' school grades.

Various media platforms can be used to run an online learning system that way. Prevention of the COVID-19 virus spread can be slightly minimized by not holding conventional classroom learning. From the interview with the participant, the platform media used were Zoom and

WhatsApp. Zoom is a video communication platform that can provide meetings and webinars; Zoom also provides content sharing. Guzacheva (2020) said Zoom allows English teachers to examine and explore the four English skills through communication. The participants did not often use this Zoom application because half of the students' facilities did not support learning with this application.

According to Rusandi (2021), WhatsApp is a trending application that is widely used in online communication. Through WhatsApp, people can form groups according to their needs for discussion, sharing information, and the learning process. By using WhatsApp, the teacher can create discussion groups in virtual classrooms. WhatsApp is the cheapest and the most accessible platform that might be used in teaching. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that with WhatsApp, teachers can communicate with many students. The teachers were directed to use the WhatsApp application according to what was said by the participant. The participant often uses the WhatsApp application to share learning material because it is more flexible and cheaper. The researchers found the same platform used in the previous study. Rusandi (2021) and Cahyo (2021) said that WhatsApp was more useful and flexible to help teachers and students learn during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **5.2 Teacher Solution**

The online learning situation makes the teacher, as a participant in this study, play a role in problem-solving. In this case, teachers have two solutions to these problems. The first is using WhatsApp as a learning media platform because it is cheaper and more flexible for solving student use, and the second is for student scores. The teacher helps the student get a score by asking the student to come to school (within the group) and do a task together. Students still understand the learning material by learning together, so the student still gets knowledge from the teacher.

### **5.2.1 Strategy in Online Learning**

This research analyses teachers' strategies for learning English during the COVID-19 pandemic at MTS N 1 Kota Jambi. The researchers collected data by conducting interviews with the English teachers. In the results of this research, the researchers found the strategies used by the teacher during online learning. Based on the interview, the participant only used one strategy in English learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy is using video as a strategy. The reason for using the video is that the students were more interested when they could watch the learning material, and for the duration of the video, it was a short video.

In the previous study, the researcher did not find the same strategies as this study. The two previous studies by Rusandi (2021) and Cahyo (2021) showed that there are several strategies to use in teaching English during online learning. Their study focuses on speaking skills. The difference between their research and this research was that the researcher did not find the strategies that they found in their research. However, this research focuses on teachers' general strategies for English learning, not on some skills. Moreover, this research found problems and solutions during teaching online learning at the school.

## **6. Conclusion**

After analyzing the data, it can be concluded that the online learning system significantly impacted education. Based on the result of this study, the researcher found the answers to the research questions, first, what are the teachers' problems with English learning classes during the Covid-19 Pandemic? The researcher has found answers to questions. The

answer to the research question is that several problems faced by the participant, teacher, and student readiness are not optimal in using the media, internet facility, and student scores. Second, what are the teachers' strategies in English learning classes during the COVID-19 pandemic? The researcher has found answers to the question. The answer is that the strategy that the participant used was using a video as a learning media.

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