The Teachers' Strategies Used in Distance Learning During Pandemic Covid – 19 MTSN 2 Kota Kediri

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Abstract

As a result of covid 19 entering Indonesia, the impact that occurs is that learning that is done offline turns into online. This is a new challenge for teachers and students. They use new online media in their learning. Therefore they use a online meeting platfoam and also use whatsapp group for giving the information A qualitative studies conducted by the researcher. He use for interview and also documentation for doing the research with English teacher in Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri. There are five teacher as a participant in this research. Another instrument that used by the researcher is documentation . The result is ELMA is the primary app to support learning process which is complete to make some activities such as material explanation, assignment, attendance list, and assessment. During the pandemic, teacher using ELMA and collaborate it among another apps and it has proven to be effective in the distance learning process Although technology really helps the learning process, the data claim that the use of technology during pandemic is not maximum. It cause the difficulties of the network connection and student's understanding. But beside it, teacher aware about this problem and provide some stagies to solve it, and one of them is free consult about the lesson that still hard to understand in every week. The teachers also apply some strategies making the teaching-lllearning process run well.

Keywords: Online learning, COVID-19 pandemic ,ELMA platform, Distance education,English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted traditional education systems around the world, creating an unprecedented challenge for schools, educators, and students alike (Adedoyin, & Soykan, 2020). As governments sought to curb the spread of the virus, social distancing measures were introduced, forcing educational institutions to close their doors and halt face-to-face learning (Dhawan, 2020). In Indonesia, like many other countries, these restrictions necessitated a sudden shift from conventional offline classroom settings to online learning environments. This abrupt change was accompanied by various challenges, both in terms of technological readiness and the ability to adapt teaching and learning processes to virtual formats.

The transition to online learning posed specific challenges for educators, especially those who were accustomed to the traditional, in-person teaching methodologies (Kaur, 2020). Teachers were compelled to explore and master new digital platforms to deliver their lessons effectively, manage classroom activities, and maintain student engagement remotely. For students, this shift required an adjustment in their learning habits and self-discipline to adapt to the new format. Furthermore, the

issue of access to digital devices and reliable internet connections became a significant concern, with disparities between urban and rural areas becoming more apparent.

Amid these challenges, English teachers faced unique difficulties due to the nature of language learning, which often relies heavily on direct communication, interactive exercises, and cultural immersion. Such activities are typically more effective in a physical classroom setting where real-time feedback and interactive exchanges can occur naturally. As a result, English teachers had to find alternative ways to achieve the same level of student engagement and understanding in a virtual format. This study seeks to examine how English teachers at Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri confronted these challenges and adapted their teaching strategies to facilitate online learning effectively during the pandemic.

In light of these transformations, online platforms became the primary means of delivering education. The adoption of various educational technologies provided both opportunities and hurdles for the teaching process. Applications such as ELMA, video conferencing tools, and instant messaging services were incorporated into daily teaching practices to sustain the flow of information and maintain student-teacher interactions. However, the effectiveness of these platforms and the extent to which they supported teaching goals varied greatly depending on several factors, including teachers' familiarity with the technology, students' access to online resources, and the adaptability of the curriculum to a virtual format.

This study focuses on the experiences of English teachers at Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri in implementing online teaching. Specifically, it examines how these teachers utilized various online platforms, including ELMA, to facilitate learning and overcome obstacles such as limited student interaction and understanding. By focusing on a particular group of educators, the study aims to provide a detailed analysis of the practical strategies and tools used in transitioning to online teaching. Additionally, it evaluates how these strategies influenced the learning outcomes and engagement of students, contributing to a better understanding of how online learning platforms can be optimized for language teaching during disruptive events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Understanding the challenges and strategies adopted by teachers in response to the pandemic is crucial for informing future educational practices. The insights gained from this study may be valuable for policymakers, school administrators, and educators seeking to enhance the effectiveness of online teaching in Indonesia and other similar contexts. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on educational resilience, technological adaptation, and innovative pedagogical approaches required to navigate the evolving landscape of online education in the face of global crises.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and strategies employed by English teachers during the transition to online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Nambiar, 2020). Qualitative research was chosen for its ability to provide rich, detailed insights into participants' perspectives and behaviors in real-world contexts, making it suitable for exploring the nuanced experiences of teachers in adapting to new educational technologies. The participants were five English teachers from Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri, who were selected based on their active involvement in online teaching during the pandemic period. The

primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews, which allowed for an open-ended exploration of teachers' personal experiences, challenges, and solutions related to online teaching. The interview questions were designed to probe into how teachers adapted their lesson planning, content delivery, and assessment methods to suit the online format, as well as their use of specific digital tools to enhance the learning process.

In addition to interviews, documentation analysis was employed as a supplementary data collection method to gain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' practical use of online learning platforms. This included reviewing lesson plans, teaching materials, online class records, and any other relevant documents that demonstrated the use of various digital tools. Special attention was given to the application of ELMA (Electronic Learning Management Application), which was identified as the primary platform used to support the learning process. The documentation also examined how ELMA was integrated with other applications, such as WhatsApp for communication and other online meeting tools for virtual class sessions. By cross-referencing interview data with documentation, the study aimed to triangulate the findings, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of how teachers leveraged digital tools to address the challenges of distance learning and maintain student engagement during the pandemic.

RESULTS

The results of the study indicated that ELMA, an electronic learning management platform, played a central role in facilitating the online learning process at Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers utilized ELMA as the primary tool for conducting and organizing their classes, as it provided an all-encompassing platform to manage various aspects of teaching. The application supported key activities, such as material delivery, where teachers could upload learning resources, provide explanations, and ensure that students had access to necessary course content. Furthermore, ELMA was employed for managing assignments, allowing students to submit their work directly through the platform, making it easier for teachers to assess and provide feedback. The platform also supported administrative tasks, such as recording attendance and conducting assessments, thereby enabling teachers to maintain the structure and requirements of a traditional classroom within an online environment.

Beyond the use of ELMA alone, teachers at Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri found it beneficial to integrate other online tools to enhance the distance learning experience. For example, synchronous communication platforms, such as Zoom or Google Meet, were used in tandem with ELMA to facilitate real-time interactions, class discussions, and virtual face-to-face explanations that supported more interactive learning. WhatsApp was also commonly employed as a supplementary communication tool to quickly share announcements, reminders, or offer individual support to students who faced challenges understanding the material. The combination of ELMA's structured learning environment with the more flexible, communication-focused capabilities of other applications enabled teachers to create a comprehensive online learning experience. This approach helped to keep students engaged, provided various forms of interaction, and allowed the educators to manage different aspects of their teaching effectively.

Despite the successes of integrating ELMA and other online tools, the study also uncovered several challenges that hindered the effectiveness of the online learning process. One of the most notable issues was the difficulty of ensuring consistent network connectivity for all students. Inadequate internet access, particularly for those living in rural or less developed areas, frequently disrupted class participation and the completion of online assignments. Moreover, teachers reported that the

shift to online learning affected students' ability to comprehend and retain the material, as the absence of a physical classroom environment and the limitations of virtual teaching made it more difficult to monitor students' understanding in real time. To mitigate these challenges, teachers proactively implemented strategies such as offering free weekly consultations, wherein students could seek additional help and clarification on topics they found difficult. These consultations allowed for more personalized support, ensuring that students who struggled to grasp certain concepts in the online classroom could still access the guidance they needed. Teachers also diversified their teaching methods within ELMA, using a mix of multimedia content, interactive assignments, and collaborative activities to enhance engagement and support diverse learning needs.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore both the successes and limitations of implementing online platforms in English language learning during the pandemic. The use of ELMA as the primary platform for managing online classes proved to be an essential part of the digital transition. It enabled teachers to centralize all necessary educational activities, including sharing learning materials, distributing assignments, managing attendance, and conducting assessments. This comprehensive approach was pivotal in maintaining the structure of the learning process and ensuring that students continued their education despite the disruption caused by school closures. However, the transition was not without its challenges, revealing critical areas where online learning struggled to meet the demands of both educators and students.

One of the main challenges was related to technological access and literacy, which directly impacted the effectiveness of the online learning experience. Although ELMA provided a cohesive platform for online learning, its success largely depended on reliable internet connectivity and access to compatible devices. Many students faced difficulties in consistently accessing online classes due to poor network connections, particularly in more remote or underserved areas. These technological barriers hindered participation in synchronous lessons and delayed the submission of assignments, creating disparities in the learning process. Moreover, the teachers themselves needed time and support to adapt to the technological demands of the platform, particularly those who were less familiar with digital tools prior to the pandemic. This revealed a need for greater digital literacy training and infrastructure support for both teachers and students to ensure the equitable delivery of education.

Another significant challenge highlighted by the study was the impact of online learning on students' comprehension and engagement. Language learning, especially English as a foreign language, typically requires interactive and communicative teaching methods, which are difficult to fully replicate in an online environment. The absence of face-to-face interaction limited the ability of teachers to gauge students' understanding, provide immediate feedback, and create an immersive language-learning experience. Consequently, students often found it challenging to grasp complex language concepts and skills through a screen. The passive nature of some online activities and the lack of direct, real-time engagement also contributed to reduced motivation and focus among students, further affecting their learning outcomes.

To address these challenges, the teachers employed several proactive strategies aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the online learning process. One key strategy was the provision of additional support outside of regular class hours. The implementation of weekly free consultations allowed students to seek clarification on difficult topics and receive one-on-one guidance, which was critical

for overcoming the limitations of online instruction. This personalized support helped bridge the gap created by the lack of in-person teaching, ensuring that students had an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the material. Additionally, the teachers made concerted efforts to diversify their teaching methods within the online platforms, using multimedia content, interactive quizzes, and group activities to create a more engaging and dynamic learning environment.

These strategies demonstrated the adaptability and resilience of teachers in the face of a rapidly changing educational landscape. By leveraging the capabilities of ELMA and other online tools, they were able to enhance student participation and provide a more holistic learning experience despite the challenges of distance learning. The ability to adapt traditional teaching methods to suit online platforms and find creative solutions to engagement issues was a key factor in maintaining the continuity and quality of education during the pandemic. Furthermore, the integration of multiple online applications alongside ELMA proved to be an effective approach, as it allowed teachers to maximize the benefits of each tool while compensating for their respective limitations.

Nonetheless, while the use of ELMA and other digital tools provided an immediate solution to the disruption caused by the pandemic, the study also pointed to the need for more sustainable and long-term strategies to support online learning. It became evident that while technology could enhance access to education, it also required a supportive infrastructure, proper training, and ongoing innovation in pedagogical approaches to ensure its effective use. The experience of Mts Negeri 2 Kota Kediri teachers highlights the importance of continuous professional development in digital literacy and the need for a stronger focus on blended learning models that can seamlessly integrate both online and offline components. Such approaches could better prepare educational institutions to respond to future disruptions and create a more resilient learning system.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the use of online platforms like ELMA for English language teaching during the pandemic, highlighting both their potential and the challenges they present. The proactive measures taken by teachers to overcome obstacles, such as technological barriers and reduced student comprehension, played a significant role in the success of online learning. However, the findings also suggest that a more comprehensive approach is necessary to support both educators and students in the digital age, ensuring that online learning is accessible, effective, and capable of fostering meaningful educational experiences. The lessons learned from this period of disruption offer important implications for the future of education, where digital learning is likely to continue playing a central role.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the use of online platforms, with ELMA as a central tool, was instrumental in sustaining the learning process during the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. ELMA's comprehensive features allowed teachers to manage various aspects of the teaching and learning process, including lesson delivery, assignments, attendance, and assessments, creating a virtual classroom environment that effectively supported distance learning. The platform's capacity to integrate with other online tools and applications also enhanced the learning experience by offering multiple channels for communication and engagement. Teachers demonstrated resourcefulness and adaptability in using ELMA alongside other digital tools to maintain student participation and address the challenges associated with online teaching. Despite the technological and pedagogical challenges faced, the successful implementation of ELMA underscores its value as a key resource for online education.

However, while the study recognizes the overall effectiveness of the transition to online learning, it also highlights areas for further improvement. Issues of unequal access to technology and internet connectivity were significant barriers that affected the consistency and inclusivity of the learning process. Additionally, the shift from traditional in-person teaching to an online format posed difficulties in ensuring student understanding and maintaining high levels of engagement, particularly in a subject like English language learning, which benefits from interactive and communicative methodologies. As such, the study suggests a need for enhanced digital infrastructure and more targeted support to address technological gaps among students and educators. Moreover, there is a necessity to develop more robust pedagogical strategies tailored to online learning environments, with a focus on fostering active student participation and better comprehension of materials. These improvements will be crucial in strengthening the effectiveness of online platforms like ELMA and ensuring a more equitable and impactful learning experience in the future.

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