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The Perspective on Distance Learning in Teaching English During the Pandemic at a Junior High School in Parung

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Abstract

This is aimed to analyze the implementation of distance learning in English at Junior High Schools in Parung during the COVID-19 pandemic. The object of this research is the students and teachers of SMP Islam Parung. The analysis focuses on the performance of the English teacher and students' responses to the English learning provided by the teacher. This study uses a qualitative method that presents the analysis in writing. To build the understanding, the qualitative approach of Miles and Huberman (1984) is narratively used in this study to interpret, explain, and analyze the data collected from observations, questionnaires, and interviews. In addition, the author uses Munir's (2012) perspective on distance learning based on electronic media to guide this research. This study concluded that online learning should be based on good cooperation between teachers and students. However, online learning activities can run well if the supporting points are adequate.

Keywords: COVID-19, Distance Learning, Online Learning Media

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INTRODUCTION

Distance learning is a teaching method where teachers and students engage in learning without direct, face-to-face interaction (Munir, 2009, p. 28). It differs significantly from traditional education systems, characterized by the physical separation between teachers and learners and the absence of in-person meetings. This approach also applies to English lessons, where students must continue working on English, a compulsory subject in Indonesia, despite the distance.

At a junior high school in Parung, the shift to distance learning during the pandemic caused a significant cultural adjustment. School members experienced "culture shock," with the quality and effectiveness of learning declining due to the limitations of online teaching (Munir, 2009). Additionally, student discipline changed compared to pre-pandemic times. These challenges were compounded by the lack of preparation for the sudden transition to an unfamiliar system, as many schools had little experience with online learning. Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure and resources to support this new mode of education further complicated the situation.

This study aims to explore how distance learning was implemented at a junior high school in Parung, with a specific focus on its impact on English lessons.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the implementation of distance learning at a junior high school in Parung during the pandemic. The focus is specifically on how English lessons were conducted in a non-face-to-face environment and the impact of this method on student learning and engagement. The participants in this study include English teachers and students from a junior high school in Parung. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select a sample of English teachers who have experience implementing distance learning during the pandemic and students from various grades to gather diverse perspectives. Data will be collected through multiple methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the distance learning experience:

1. **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with English teachers to gain insights into their experiences, challenges, and strategies for implementing distance learning. Additionally, focus group discussions will be held with students to capture their responses and feelings about the online learning process.
2. **Surveys:** A questionnaire will be distributed to students to gather quantitative data regarding their experiences with distance learning. This survey will include questions related to their engagement, motivation, and the perceived effectiveness of online English lessons.
3. **Observations:** Classroom observations will be conducted during online English lessons to document teaching methods, student participation, and interactions. This will provide real-time insights into the effectiveness of distance learning strategies.

4. **Document Analysis:** Relevant documents, such as lesson plans, teaching materials, and student feedback, will be analyzed to understand the content and structure of distance learning in English classes.

Data from interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis will be thematically analyzed. This process will involve coding the data to identify patterns and themes related to the implementation of distance learning and its impact on English lessons. Ethical approval will be obtained from the relevant authorities, and informed consent will be secured from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study, ensuring that participants' identities and responses are protected. The research will be conducted over a specified period, including phases for data collection, analysis, and reporting. A detailed timeline will be established to ensure the study is completed efficiently and effectively. This method aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how distance learning was implemented at the junior high school level and its implications for English education during the pandemic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Result of Observation

The results of the observations are categorized into two parts based on the results of the observations that the authors did for one month; eight meetings at junior high schools in Parung

1.1. Students

In this study, the students are observed based on their engagement towards the distance learning mode. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, students carried out face-to-face learning activities. At that time, they had a fairly high enthusiasm and enthusiasm for English learning activities. Meanwhile, it was different during the covid-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia. This resulted in all schools conducting online learning activities or distance learning or learning from home systems so that students also experienced many different attitudes or responses such as lack of interest in learning, lack of responsibility as a student to complete the tasks given by the teacher, lack of discipline during online classes, and low levels of understanding due to decreased grasping power.

During distance learning, students become less free or limited in asking questions and interacting because there is a sense of dissatisfaction when only asking through online classes. So this triggers a lack of student interest in asking or answering during learning (passive). In addition, students also feel bored with monotonous learning media, even though teachers have innovated to use several techniques and share various references in delivering material during distance learning.

Another difference that appears during observation, students are happier if the teacher explains and teaches in class than in online forums, namely in the form of their lack of cooperative attitude during learning, which tends to turn off the camera and is reluctant to respond to stimuli; explanations and questions, especially when learning is carried out in the afternoon. Based on observations, the students want adequate learning allocations, interesting

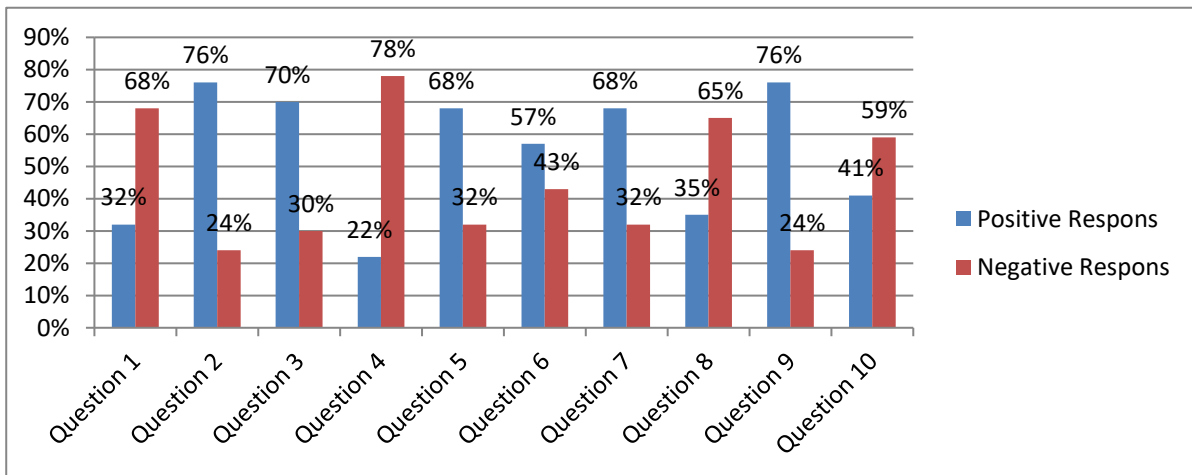
learning media, and teaching methods that are not monotonous, do not burden students with assignments, or provide more variety in learning.

1.2. Teacher

In this study, researchers also observed teachers based on the implementation of distance learning. Based on observations, interviews with English teachers, and student responses during online learning. During the study, the researcher found that the teacher had performed well and followed the SOP for the teaching sequence despite many obstacles during the learning process. English teachers also innovate a lot in determining how to deliver material and examples to students. However, this study also found from the students' side that they were not interested in participating in online learning activities in some meetings. This result can be seen in the online forum conducted by researchers for eight meetings, where in a week, they hold two meetings; one in the morning and another in the afternoon. This also causes teachers to put more effort into building a supportive classroom atmosphere during teaching and learning activities, especially at meetings held during the day. On the other hand, students tend not to respond well when the teacher explains the material or gives assignments.

1.2.1. Questionnaire

This study also asked students to fill out questionnaire containing questions related to time preference, media and technique used during the distance learning mode. The overall results of the observation can be seen in Figure 4.1.



According to terms of the time of the lesson, 12 students out of 37 suggested that learning has an allocation of more than 60 minutes, while 25 students felt that the allocation was sufficient. 28 out of 37 want learning to be done in the morning because the atmosphere is still fresh, while the other 9 students don't mind if learning is done in the afternoon. 11 students out of 37 suggested adding English lessons, while 26 students needed additional time to learn English.

1.2.2. Technic and Media

According to technic and media result 29 students out of 37 felt that they had enough references to learning English through YouTube, while 8 other students felt it was not enough. 25 students out of 37 find it difficult to understand learning materials through PPT, while 12 students find it easy to learn English only through PPT. 21 students out of 37 were dissatisfied with how the teacher taught, while 16 students were satisfied with the way the teacher taught online. 25 students out of 37 prefer to practice rather than just reading, while 12 students are enough if only reading. 24 students out of 37 were not happy if they only listened to the teacher's explanation through YouTube media, while 13 students felt happy if they only listened to the teacher's explanation through YouTube. 28 students out of 37 were satisfied with the examples given by the teacher, while 9 students were dissatisfied. 24 students out of 37 feel that the burden given in learning English is not heavy, while 13 students feel that the burden given is very heavy.

1.2.3. Interview

Researchers conducted interviews with English teachers; Mrs. Bella. Questions were asked about learning references, variations in learning methods, impressions and learning messages, effectiveness, and time efficiency.

1.2.4. Barriers

The obstacles experienced by Mrs. Bella as an English teacher during the observation, which took place eight times, according to her narrative, she experienced obstacles such as limited time, unstable signals, and students who were not cooperative when online learning was carried out, as well as other problems such as running out of time; credit or internet quota. According to Mrs. Bella:

Usually the obstacles experienced in online learning are general problems such as limited time, networks, and students' moods. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

1.2.5. Performance

According to Mrs. Bella, students' English scores during distance learning during the pandemic experienced a significant decline:

Honestly, in a pandemic like this there will be a decline, and the scoring system is also different during normal learning. And we also never know for sure what student capabilities are like during this online learning. Therefore, as educators, we try to stabilize student values. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

1.2.6. Time Available

According to Mrs. Bella, learning English during the pandemic experienced a reduction in time-based on government regulations, which was originally 90 minutes to 60 minutes.

However, this is enough for Mrs. Bella, but she also said that students still need more time to learn English, especially to practice conversation or others:

Personally, one hour is very less, for English, it is at least an hour and a half because we need time to interact with students. However, due to pandemic conditions like this, I feel like I've had enough time to study. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

1.2.7. Teaching Material

According to Mrs. Bella as an educator and facilitator in teaching and learning activities, teachers must always try to provide new model innovations in learning, giving daily assignments and group and individual practice assignments. One of the ways Mrs. Bella tries to use YouTube media is to get videos or songs that will be used as references as examples of student materials and assignments:

I use references from online media, one of which is YouTube, whatever is suitable for students as long as it adds insight to students. Because at several meetings, students were very enthusiastic when I explained the material through video shows or songs. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

1.2.8. Improvemet

Based on the teaching materials and learning techniques used by the English teacher, it can build interaction between the teacher and students, which is usually done at the beginning of the English lesson to improve the mood and motivation of students as a stimulus in the learning that will take place, and this is also related to the teaching methods that need to be taught—always updated by the teacher to reduce the feeling of boredom and the inability of students to understand the learning material provided by the teacher during online learning and the material distributed to students via WhatsApp:

We as educators must be familiar with our students, as the saying goes, if you don't know you don't love it. Moreover, the lessons I teach are foreign languages, so I have to make the students happy with me by improvising myself every time I teach them by having a sense of humor in the classroom. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

2. Discussion

2.1. How is distance learning implemented by an English teacher at a Junior High School

This study aims to reveal how distance learning is implemented at Junior High School in Parung. The application of distance learning helps the government break the chain of virus transmission in the community, providing new challenges for every school to carry out learning with modern methods and media or technology so that students are ultimately not outdated and able to keep up with technological developments.

However, the implementations of distance learning also have several problems which disrupt the process of learning. Based on the findings of the researcher, statements about the lack of effectiveness and time efficiency were obtained from the observations of the researchers before conducting the research; in everyday life. From this time problem, these problems are, first is such as the emergence of statements that the media used was less varied so that learning was felt to be boring. From this saturation comes another statement that causes boredom not only from less varied media but also from the techniques or learning methods used that are monotonous and seem to burden students with tasks.

2.2. Ineffectiveness of Learning Time

In this study, researchers found the ineffectiveness of learning time from inadequate time duration. It can prove from the results of the questionnaire distributed to students regarding the time or duration of learning listed in points 1, 2 and 3. According to the questionnaire results in point 1, as many as 68% of students feel that English learning time is lacking, and 32% of students feel learning time is sufficient. In point 2, as many as 76% of students prefer learning in the morning, and 24% do not mind learning during the day. Finally, in point 3, as many as 70% of students need additional time, and 30% of students do not need additional time. So, from the results of the questionnaire points 1, 2 and 3, we can conclude that English learning time during this pandemic is less effective.

This is also reinforced by direct statements from interviews with English teachers; Mrs. Bella. She said:

The second biggest obstacle after networking in distance learning is the time from 90 minutes to 60 minutes. This has certainly greatly reduced the allotted time for material and practice in learning English. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

2.3. Importance learning media

In this study, researchers found learning media adequate during distance learning English. In questionnaire points 4 and 5, English teachers use YouTube as a reference in providing material and students' assignments, and English teachers use PPT to disseminate material through WhatsApp groups. In questionnaire point 4, 78% of students feel that learning is only delivered through YouTube reference media, and 22% feel that learning through YouTube media is sufficient. The questionnaire results at point 5 showed that as many as 68% of students find it difficult to understand the learning material delivered through PPT, and 32% of students feel it is not difficult to understand the material delivered through PPT.

In this condition, the results of the researcher's interview with the English teacher were also obtained; Mrs. Bella said:

Due to the many obstacles experienced by teachers and students in distance learning during the pandemic, every teacher in particular will try to find alternatives to deliver learning materials so that every student gets the same explanation. Therefore, one of the easiest ways to convey English material is to make PPT and then disseminate it to students via WhatsApp. Because this is the

only way so that the material can be conveyed evenly to all students; especially students who do not have barriers in the network or limited quota. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

2.4. Students preferences on teaching technic

This study found the results of English teachers' techniques or learning methods during distance learning. Based on the findings, this study found that students tend to dislike the teaching techniques used by the teacher. This is shown in the questionnaire, where 57% of students are not very interested in the techniques and methods used by English teachers. On the other hand, as many as 43% of students feel interested in the techniques and methods used by the teacher. Students prefer to learn English by direct practice rather than just reading and listening to the material from the teacher. It can be seen that 65% of students prefer to listen to the teacher's explanation face-to-face (offline). According to Mrs. Bella, this might stem from students' moods during the distance learning session. She said that:

Of all the inadequate responses that students feel. In essence, a mood that is not appropriately built creates bad learning conditions. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

2.5. How are the response of students during the implementation of distance learning

Based on the researcher's analysis results through interviews, observations, and questionnaires, the implementation of distance learning during the pandemic received a less response from students. It can be seen from some of the adverse reactions from students towards online learning, which are students not engaging in education. Eventually, the student becomes less disciplined when following the lesson..

2.6. Lack of engagement

During the distance learning session, students lacked engagement in learning. It is because the learning hours are carried out during the day, and students feel less comfortable with the teaching techniques carried out during online learning. The questionnaire results showed that 24 out of 37 students were dissatisfied with the teacher's explanation through YouTube media; from the observations, when the teacher explained, the students tended not to respond and even turn off the camera. According to Mrs. Bella, keeping a distance and learning engagement are difficult. She stated that:

During distance learning, the teacher cannot be sure whether the student is there and listening to the material delivered by the teacher because students tend to turn off the camera during learning. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

2.7. Lack of discipline

Due to lack of engagement, students become less responsive and do not care about the teacher who teaches or what he is learning in the distance learning session. In addition,

students tend to underestimate the tasks given by the teacher. For example, this reported by Mrs. Bella:

When working on assignments, students often do not complete tasks in the allotted time, even until the learning ends. (Interview. June 15, 2022. My translate)

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the response of junior high school English students and teachers to changes in learning and teaching activities in English during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, this study tries to reveal how the influence of changes in the learning and teaching system at the junior high school level during the covid-19 pandemic outbreak in Indonesia requires all teaching and learning activities to be carried out from home. Therefore, this research invites Mrs. Bella, an English teacher from a public school in Parung, for an individual interview. In addition, this study also analyzed the questionnaires distributed to 37 8th grade students for the implementation of Mrs. Bella in teaching English.

The findings show that learning English during the pandemic at the junior high school in Parung was ineffective because teachers experienced a reduction in teaching hours so that students' material and practical assignments could not be done as a whole. Then, teachers and students often experience obstacles in the form of an unstable network (error). As a result, teachers find student responses that tend to be passive during online learning. This is also triggered by students who prefer to study face-to-face rather than online because they can more freely ask questions and practice with the teacher when learning directly. In contrast, they did not find this in online learning, even though the teacher always tried to provide fun, practical assignments. In addition, time constraints cause teachers to take the initiative to collect teaching materials that can improve the quality of learning. As a result, teachers try to always look for material references or examples that can build a classroom atmosphere that aims to make teachers interact with students.

In conclusion, students and teachers have important roles in teaching and learning activities, so they must communicate well. Because many factors can lead to misunderstandings if one does not provide good service, the teacher gives the material clearly, and the students respond to the teacher during the learning process. The goal is to form a class of good quality and effective.

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