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⁴ The Challenges Faced by Students in Learning English (Post-Pandemic Era)

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Abstract. This article was used to describe the challenges that students face when studying English in the new normal era. The qualitative descriptive design was used as the research methodology. The subjects that will be involved are students in SMA/ MA/ SMK/ equivalent in South Sulawesi Province. The data was obtained from the questionnaire. Qualitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the qualitative data. The analysis's results will be presented as a description of the challenges experienced when studying English during the New Normal era. For students, teachers, policymakers, and scholars of education and foreign language learning, this definition will be helpful. This research is related to the implementation of students' English learning strategies in the new normal era. The researcher distributed the questionnaire on the Google Form link to several high school students in South Sulawesi and 206 students sent back the results. The results of the research showed that many challenges faced by students in learning English during the current New Normal (during and after the Covid-19 Pandemic). These challenges come from student conditions, teacher conditions, school conditions, environmental conditions, material conditions, learning processes, and the application of technology.

Keywords: Challenges, English, Learning, Strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of strategy in instruction and learning is crucial. To ensure that learning activities are successful and efficient, teachers and students should participate in the strategy activity together. Naturally, it is the teacher's job to develop a method that involves the students in the learning process. The purpose of teaching, according to Silver et al., is to weave a conversation that brings these diverse people together around a shared subject of learning. The kinds of forms or methods of plans teachers use to accomplish this goal are referred to as strategies. The best speaking instruction strategy must be able to be decided by the teacher for each student. While the teaching and learning process, a wide range of strategies are used and created. Speaking and writing have different goals, so different methods would be employed to improve each ability. Writing is concentrated on the capacity to produce written language, whereas speaking is concentrated on producing spoken language. It's also crucial to match the teaching strategy for each English skill to achieve the desired results. The crucial strategy must be requested from the teacher by the students. The instructor's teaching methods must be suitable for the student's condition and grade level. The speaking techniques aid the teacher in properly instructing speaking. In comparison to the ninth-grades and eighth-grades, different teaching methods will be used in the seventh grade. In classrooms with the high motivated students versus to classrooms with the low motivated students, teachers employ different teaching pedagogies.

English is typically only delivered and studied as a foreign language in Indonesia (TEFL). This suggests that English is mainly acquired and taught in classrooms as opposed to as part of daily conversation. The English language learners in this country, Indonesia, do not have easy facilitation to speaking the language outside of the classroom. Assert that formal instruction is only the one way to learn a foreign language. As a result, Indonesia presents particular challenges to the teaching and learning of the English language that are not present in other countries like Hong Kong or Singapore, where English is spoken more often daily.

Learning a target language in a nation where it is not widely spoken is known as foreign language learning, according to Berns (1990). Since interpersonal communication is not primarily conducted in this example's target language, English, there are limited opportunities for language learners outside of the classroom. When a foreign or target language is infrequently used in informal situation like at the outside of the class, input and language use in the class activities are important (Suryati, 2013).

Teaching EFL in Indonesia is challenging due to a few variables, claims Sulistiyono (2009). First, EFL teachers are required to manage the big classes with usually more than 40 students inside. Although the definition of a "big" class in language acquisition varies depending on the discipline, this number of students is excessive for a language classroom. Then, not all English-language learners are driven. For exam purposes, English is a required subject, thus pupils are required to learn it; yet, they only have a limited amount of weekly exposure to the language.

Low student motivation and insufficient English instruction time are challenges for teachers as well as students as learners. Third, less attention is placed on English grammar and vocabulary in classrooms and universities, and more emphasis is placed on the reading skills (Sawir, 2005; Setiyadi, 2001).

In conclusion, it appears that a few variables make it challenging to teach and learn EFL in this country, Indonesia. The level of teacher qualifications, poor English language ability, size of the classroom, student involvement, classroom-based learning, and a lack of resources all have a substantial impact on the success of EFL teaching and learning (Bradford, 2007; Kassing, 2011; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Sulistiyo, 2009; Yulia, 2013).

There have been various issues expressed concerning the Indonesian government's EFL policy as a result of research in the areas of curriculum, teacher competency, and English language instruction. For instance, The Indonesian government's proposed definition of professional competence, is overly restrictive and needs to be viewed in the social context of teacher professionalism. Additionally, several policies and practices in Indonesian EFL classrooms are inconsistent. In consideration of the case, that it is urgently necessary to increase the policymakers' familiarity with the creation, use, and evaluation of the EFL curriculum. The stated competence-based curriculum for English instruction in senior and junior high schools levels aims to introduce students to English texts and support their language development so they can eventually obtain better jobs.

When the Covid-19 Pandemic arrived, Indonesian curriculum reform policies also took place, as they had in the past numerous times. Covid-19 pandemic is now starting to influence the educational sector. The goal of this action is to limit Covid-19 transmission. All educational institutions are urged to forgo carrying out their regular operations, which will aid in containing the spread of Covid-19. Lockdown or quarantine measures have been introduced in a number of the afflicted nations to reduce the interaction of large numbers of people who could facilitate the spread of Covid-19. Various questions need to be addressed about the coronavirus's spread and how it affects education programs.

According to the description given above, it is important to observe students' EFL learning strategies as Indonesia's curriculum improves. Based on this situation, researchers are motivated to carry out a study with the following title: "The Challenges faced by Students in Learning English in the New Normal Era".

RESEARCH METHOD

The researchers in this research used qualitative descriptive research. Researchers are interested in understanding more about the challenging aspects of students learning English in the new normal era. Throughout this research, the researchers concurrently gathered qualitative data to respond to this question. The subjects of this research were SMA/ MA/ SMK/ equivalent students in South Sulawesi Province. The objective of this research is to examine the methods that students employ to learn English in the new normal era. The number of schools is around 535, the number of English teachers is about 1605, and the total student population is about 50,000. The survey was administered online in an order to involve as many students as possible in the research. 206 students returned the

answers in about a month. Data from the questionnaire were searched for and organized during the data analysis process. Data reduction, display, and data verification are the three major flows of activity that form qualitative data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The implementation of English learning strategies in this new normal era is the focus of this research. The students are receiving online questionnaires from the researchers regarding the difficulties they are having learning English in the new normal era. 206 students responded to the survey after the researchers sent the questionnaire to some students at senior high school English in South Sulawesi via a Google Form link.

The challenges faced in learning English during the current Pandemic era

The current Pandemic Covid- 19 era presented various learning challenges that had an impact on the study habits of senior high school English students. Some students have opinions regarding the challenges encountered when implementing the curriculum during the Covid- 19 Pandemic.

1. Students Condition:

- a. Students do not understand the material (S4, S8, S9, S16, S26, S28, S30, S31, S32, S42, S47, S48, S51, S57, S60, S62, S66, S69, S73, S89, S95, S96, S106, S110, S111, S120, S125, S132, S135, S149, S159, S172, S173, S174, S175, S189, S192, S198, S199)
- b. Keep healthy (S23, S126)
- c. Students learning strategies (S27, S46, S58, S59, S77, S87, S92, S107)
- d. Keep students focused (S99)
- e. Students have difficulty speaking (S3, S81, S146)
- f. Students always think English is difficult (S22, S43, S45, S50, S74, S86, S102, S104, S105, S118, S125, S127, S134, S182, S194)
- g. Less student's confidence (S67)
- h. Draw students' focus to keep them engaged in the learning process (S10, S93)
- i. Less improvement in students' pre- or basic knowledge, cognitive level, or ability (S12, S63, S68, S71, S72, S78, S84, S108, S112, S115, S116, S123, S131, S169, S178)
- j. Students' motivation, mood, feeling, interest, and spirit (S35, S36, S85, S166, S190, S121)
- k. Students awareness discipline and responsibility (S14, S17, S19, S44, S70, S75, S94, S117, S136)
- l. Most students are unable to achieve their data quota requirements or internet network requirements for online learning (S24, S39, S55, S80, S90, S91, S119, S129, S140, S141, S147, S148, S155, S161, S180, S183, S184, S185, S186, S187, S188, S200)
- m. Students' disrespect the time that passes and their lack of self-discipline in completing tasks (S25, S144)
- n. Students spend their time playing online games (S142)

2. School Condition:
 - a. School facilities and infrastructure (S191, S196, S197, S200, S201, S202, S203, S204, S205)
 - b. Limited online learning facilities (S20, S33, S103, S135, S139, S195, S206)
3. Environment Condition:
 - a. Students' living environment (S24)
 - b. Competitive environment (with friends) (S7)
 - c. Corona virus (S2, S29, S181)
 - d. Revolution (S13, S90, S143)
 - e. Globalization (S13)
 - f. Language and culture diversity (S13, S179)
 - g. Time allocation (S76, S150, S165, S177, S188)
4. Learning Process:
 - a. Online learning (S41, S54, S61, S65, S95, S138)
 - b. Situation of learning process (S38, S53, S79, S145)
5. Materials Condition:
 - a. Understandable materials (S28, S54)
 - b. Curriculum (S124)
6. Technology Implementation:
 - a. Using website/ Learning Management System (LMS) (S34)
 - b. Using mobile phone/ handphone (S52, S80, S82, S106, S130)
 - c. Social media (S101)

The challenges that will be faced in learning English in the upcoming New Normal (Post Pandemic) era

Teachers of senior high school English faced a variety of challenges that had an impact on their pedagogical approaches during the Pandemic COVID-19. Some teachers have opinions regarding the challenges that could occur when learning English in the upcoming new normal (post-pandemic era).

1. Students Condition:
 - a. Adaptation of students in process to new normal learning (S7, S19, S21, S30, S33, S48, S57, S70, S116, S119, S126, S129, S145, S172, S173, S174, S175, S180, S181, S183, S184, S185, S186, S187, S191, S194, S195, S196, S197, S200, S201, S202, S203, S204, S205)
 - b. Students learning strategies (S2, S8, S14, S34, S38, S41, S50, S61, S79, S104, S146, S150, S152)
 - c. Lack of students' vocabulary (S3, S9, S58, S59)
 - d. Lack of students' speaking/ pronunciation (S6, S16, S47, S52, S63, S67, S77, S107, S147, S179)
 - e. Less students' confidence (S66, S76)

- f. Students' learning time allocation/ learning duration (S76, S87, S165, S169, S177, S178)
 - g. During the pandemic, students lose a lot of conceptual knowledge about the subject (S78)
 - h. Renew the interest and motivation of students who have lost some of it, even if they were absent during the pandemic (S80, S182, S187)
 - i. Students' motivation, attitude, awareness, interest, and spirit (S89, S106, S121, S122, S123, S125, S135, S144, S166, S199)
 - j. Students cognitive, pedagogy skill (S43, S44, S115, S131)
 - k. Students understand the materials (S15, S49, S51, S68, S69, S75, S86, S91, S110, S111, S112, S118, S134, S138, S139, S140, S141, S188, S189)
 - l. Students difficult understand the material (S37, S88, S117, S132, S190, S192)
 - m. Students characteristics (S39)
 - n. Lack of students' knowledge of English/ English is difficult for them (S47, S71, S74, S101, S105, S127, S137, S159)
 - o. Lack of students focus (S72, S92, S129, S143)
 - p. Students spend their time playing online games (S136)
 - q. Learning strategies (S142)
2. Teachers Condition:
- a. Teachers responsibility (S36, S84, S93, S103, S148)
 - b. Teaching strategies (S17, S46, S82, S99)
3. Environment Condition:
- a. Corona virus (S10, S20, S29)
 - b. Social/ economy background (S55)
4. Learning Process:
- a. Online learning (S65, S90, S108, S149, S155)
 - b. Curriculum implementation (S124)
 - c. Face-to-face learning process (S13, S94, S161)
 - d. New learning process model (S4, S53, S62, S198)
 - e. Many assignment/ task (S22, S25, S45, S60, S73, S95, S96, S102, S120)
 - f. Using mobile phone/ handphone (S12)

The challenges experienced during and after the Covid-19 outbreak according to the researchers' findings and explanation, were caused by the state of the students, teachers, schools, environments, educational process, and technological use.

English students in the Covid-19 era are currently using a variety of electronic or e-learning materials in their learning practices. They benefit from modern technical advances. Through e-learning, teachers may inspire and motivate students to master language abilities including speaking, listening, reading, and writing in English. Based on online learning, their methods for enhancing their language abilities, grammar, and vocabulary have improved since the Covid-19 epidemic.

Similar to the classification provided here, O'Malley and Chamot's classification of language learning techniques (SBB) into metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies (1990: 197). Examples of metacognitive strategies include selective attention techniques like giving attention to specific language aspects like words or phrases, planning techniques like structuring spoken or written discourse, monitoring techniques, and assessment techniques (e.g., re-check understanding after reading or listening to a discourse). Repetition, grouping, inference, summarizing, applying, using pictures to understand the meaning, and drawing on prior linguistic knowledge are some cognitive strategies. Additionally, self-encouragement, giving precise responses to questions, and cooperative activities are examples of social/affective techniques.

CONCLUSIONS

The current Pandemic Covid-19 era presents a variety of challenges for senior high school students studying English. Some students have opinions about the difficulties implementing learning practices during the Covid-19, such as, Students do not understand the material; Students' learning strategies; Students having difficulty speaking; Students always thinking English is difficult; Less of students' basic knowledge or pre-knowledge, cognitive level or ability; Students' motivation, mood, feeling, interest, spirit; Students awareness discipline and responsibility; The majority of students are not able to meet their data quota needs/ internet network for online learning; School facilities and infrastructure; Limited online learning facilities; Coronavirus; Revolution; Time allocation; Online learning; Situation of the learning process; and Using mobile phone/ handphone.

The current Pandemic Covid-19 era presents a variety of challenges for senior high school students studying English. Some students have opinions about the challenges that learning English will encounter in the forthcoming new normal (post-pandemic era), including: Adaptation of students to the new normal of learning; Students' learning strategies; Students' vocabulary lack; Lack of students' speaking/ pronunciation; Students' learning time allocation/ learning duration; Students' motivation, mood, feeling, interest, spirit; Students cognitive, pedagogy skill; Students understand the materials; Students difficult understand the material; Lack of students' knowledge of English/ English is difficult for them; Lack of students focus; Teachers responsibility; Teaching strategies; Coronavirus; Online learning; Face-to-face learning process; New learning process model; and Many assignment/ task.

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