# An Analysis of Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Speaking Through Online Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic in SMA N 2 Abiansemal

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## Abstract

*This research aims at at finding out 1) the challenges of the teachers in teaching speaking during online learning in SMAN 2 Abiansemal, 2) the teachers' ways to cope with the challenges in teaching speaking during online learning in SMAN 2 Abiansemal and 3) the strengths and the weaknesses of the strategy used by the investigated teachers during online learning in teaching speaking. The subjecs of this research were three English teachers in SMAN 2 Abiansemal. To collect the data, two instruments were needed, observation sheet and interview guide. The obtained data were analyzed qualitative by using Interactively Data Analysis Model by Miles and Huberman (1994). This research discovers 1) 9 challenges in online learning, 2) 9 ways to cope the challenges, and 3) 9 weaknesses and strengths of the strategy.*

*Keywords: challenges, speaking skill, online learning*

## Introduction

As it becomes more flexible and easy-accessed, communication inclines to be a human's daily need. Human nowadays can easily communicate each other due to the enhancement of technology. In which, people tend to use the most spoken language on earth, English, to ease them in doing the communication itself. Regarding to the scope of communication, the role of speaking further becomes inevitable to be neglected (Arham, Yassi, & Arafah, 2016). Even though the notion of communication these days is vary; yet, communication in general occurs when people interact each other through speaking.

Speaking and communicating occur in various condition. Yet, it is agreeable to say that the most observable of speaking and communicating conduct in the classroom, especially during the learning activities (Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). It denotes to the teacher who explains the material being taught, which certainly through speaking to the students. Especially in the context of EFL countries, where English teacher is required to often speak as it needs to be clearly explained (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). Also, it is part of teacher's obligation since English is not their mother tongue.

Being not acquiring English as the mother tongue, somehow, it is really challenging for the EFL teacher to convey the message to the students. Various challenges have been faced, regarding to making the language understandable, guiding to meet the basic concept of the material, raising students' interest, sustaining the class climate, and any other challenges which probably need to be more investigated (Ahmed, 2018; Aleksandrzak, 2011; Musliadi, 2016; Nuraini, 2016; Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019; and Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). It portrays that teaching in different language from the mother tongue seems to be full of encounters. Relating to that narration, it drives us to the clause about challenge in teaching speaking in EFL countries. Teaching speaking in common ways, face to face, even really challenges for the teacher because teacher needs to fully guided the students to speak in good ways; emphasizing the accuracy, pronunciation, content, etc (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019 and Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). Right now, imagine how challenging to teach speaking to the student in online.

In the beginning of 2020, global society faces Covid-19 Pandemic which forces everyone to follow various new habits. This pandemic brings deep impact for all people life, such as in the sector of economic, health, education, and so on. The impact which mostly felt by the citizens, especially in Indonesia, is education. It is because there is so many chaos happened in this field which is from the students or the teacher (Amir, Sudarman, Asfar, & Batara, 2020). This pandemic makes all people worry to interact face to face with others, as the viruses can spread anytime through people to people. This condition requires people to stay and work from home. The government makes a regulation that the students and teachers have to stay home and led them to learn in online (Widiastuti, Mantra, & Sukoco, 2020). In this situation, the teachers play a brave role and they are expected to work professionally, so that the atmosphere of learning become conducive during online learning. In this case, teachers should work hard in teaching, because they teach the students without seeing them in direct interaction. Moreover, somehow, it is difficult to control their study. Thus, the teachers must be creative, but still consider the students' health. Teaching speaking further becomes one of the hardest parts to be taught in online because the interaction could not be done directly (Sun & Chen, 2016). Also, it cannot be done smoothly somehow when the connection does not stable. Many challenges of course are faced by the teacher in teaching speaking in online during this pandemic, which seems to be really interesting to be studied and revealed to the public.

Previous studies around speaking have been broadly investigated. Especially, in the context of challenge in teaching speaking, numerous studies show that in EFL context, various challenges further become really influential during teaching and learning activities. Some challenges occurred are guiding to develop the content, enhancing student's accuracy, providing media to make a fun learning climate, preventing errors in pronouncing the words, and other challenges which somehow really specific in a special scope (Widiastuti et al., 2020). The urgency of this writing on why it needs to be conducted is that this writing provides challenges in teaching speaking in different method and world climate. The present research investigates how is the challenges faced by the teacher during the covid-19 pandemic, that forces learning activity to be done in online. This research aims to figure out the faced challenge and also the solution found by the teachers. Further novelty offered regards to become reference and give indirect

experiences for the teacher who teaches speaking; so that they can imagine the best strategy to be used during this pandemic. Furthermore, it further becomes one of references for other researchers in conducting other studies in a similar scope.

## Method

This research is qualitative research with case study research design. It investigated the the challenge of the SMAN 2 Abiansemal's English teacher in teaching speaking skill through online learning during covid-19 pandemic. The subjecs of this research were three English teachers in SMAN 2 Abiansemal. To collect the data, two instruments were needed, observation sheet and interview guide. The obtained data were analyzed qualitative by using Interactively Data Analysis Model by Miles and Huberman (1994). The specific steps were 1) data reduction (selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming field note transcription), 2) data display (compressing and importing obtained data into the tables), and 3) conclusion drawing.

## Findings and Discussions

This research aims at finding out 1) the challenges of the teachers in teaching speaking during online learning in SMAN 2 Abiansemal, 2) the teachers's ways to cope with the challenges in teaching speaking during online learning in SMAN 2 Abiansemal and 3) the strengths and the weaknesses of the strategy used by the investigated teachers during online learning in teaching speaking. Therefore, the findings are divided into three based on the research objectives. Investigation was done to three English teachers in SMAN 2 Abiansemal with interview technique. English teacher 1 was coded ET 1; English teacher 2 was coded ET 2; English teacher 3 was coded ET 3. Finding and discussion can be divided into three based on the aims of this research as follows.

### The Teachers' Challenges in Teaching Speaking during Online Learning

Based on the data analysis, there are 9 problems faced by the teachers, namely : 1) internet connection at school could not optimally support the teacher to conduct online teaching, 2) the students did not fully understand the features of the teaching learning platform used by the teachers, 3) the students were less-motivated in following the online learning because they thought online learning is not a real learning, 4) the communication between the teacher and students were not really intensive as they were learning at school, 5) the time allocation of the online learning was not sufficient for teaching speaking so the teacher had difficulty in finding appropriate media for teaching speaking, especially the media in form of video, 6) many students were reluctant to speak in online learning, 7) in the beginning, the teachers did know how to use the online learning platform (Google Classroom, Moodle, and Melajah ID), 8) many students did not submit their assignment on time and 9) the students could not use various teaching methods to teach speaking. The challenges came from three sources, namely : the teachers, the students, supporting facilities and learning system. Those challenges made online learning for speaking was less ideal.

The teachers had three challenges in teaching speaking via online learning, namely: lack of interaction, lack of knowledge about software for online learning, and lack of ways to apply various teaching method. Online learning brings difference social attitude because the students have limited interaction (Siemens et al., 2005). Lack of interaction in online learning became a huge challenge for teacher. Moreover, speaking needs intensive interaction between the teacher and students. Interaction in this sense means face to face interaction at the same time in the same room. Teachers felt that interaction through online platform could not be maximal since they could not watch the students directly. Students' eye contact, gestures and performance cannot be observed during the teaching learning process. Besides that, the teachers took more time to learn how to use the online platform. This process was frustrating since the teachers never did it before. They must spend more energy, time and effort to learn this, of which at the same time they had to prepare the material, media and evaluation of the teaching learning process. Since the teachers never did online learning before, this situation made the teachers unable to explore their creativity because they focused on mastering the features of the online learning platform. They had limited time to explore or find other online media or platform to be applied so they could use various teaching method in online setting.

From the students, there were four challenges, namely: lack of students' understanding about used platform, lack of motivation, students' reluctancy to speak, and lack of responsibility to collect assignment. Online learning should be started by the students' understanding about the platform used (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 1999). It may make the students less of motivation because they have to learn about it. Furthermore, online learning with less interaction makes the students little bit reluctant to speak or to be active. The lack of students' understanding about the used platform were caused by the unfamiliarity of the students in using online learning platform. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the students never had online learning session, so they had a significant difference of learning condition. This situation forced the students to learn how to use the platform, especially learning the features of the platform used by the teachers. At this time, both the teachers and students were struggling to prepare themselves in order to be ready with the online learning situation. Their struggle also contributed to the motivation in which many students were less-motivated in following the online learning, especially in the beginning of online learning. Their concentrations were divided into two in which they had to focus on the material of teaching but at the same time they also had to master the features of online platform. This situation unfortunately added students learning challenges.

Students' lack of motivation was triggered by the unfamiliarity of the students to the online learning. Many of them did not consider online learning as a real learning as they had at school. It is in line with the finding by Irawan (2020). The students taught in online learning tend to do copy and paste from their friends. They are lazy to be active in the classrrom because they have lack of motivation.  It made them not really active in the online learning, especially when the teachers asked them to practice speaking. This situation also triggered the students not to speak in the online learning platform. The teachers also had problem in collecting students' assignments. Although many of them had collected on time, yet some of the students did not submit the assignments on time. Many factors caused the students did not collect the assignment

on time. When the students have motivation, they do hard working to achieve the learning target (Sardiman, 2012). They will not be lazy or do bad things during learning process.

In terms of facilities, internet connectivity was not enough to support online learning. Facilities are important element to support effective learning (Hamalik, 2008). Even though the school had increased the internet credit, it still could not make online learning ran well. Actually, internet facility and infrastructure had become one of the prominent challenges in conducting online learning in Indonesia. Previously, Irawan (2020) also reported that internet connection was one of the weaknesses of teaching speaking in online by using LMS-Edmodo. The internet network, unstable internet network and internet credit were the obstacles of online learning in Indonesia. Lastly, the online learning system also became the challenge. For one session, online learning was only done for 30 minutes. It was different from offline learning in which English was taught for 90 minutes for one session. In this situation, the teachers could not directly check students speaking performance, because the time was really limited. Here, the teachers should be able to manage the class well in limited time. Yamin (2013) argues that the teachers must manage effective materials in established time so learning will be effective. Hamalik (2008) also argues that managing schedule well directs to effective learning instruction. It should direct the students to learn independently. However, the online learning provided the students with more time to learn by themselves at home through online learning individually. They did not need to wait for the chance to perform their speaking. The students could practice through making video. It is in line with report of Rerung (2018) discovering that through online learning the students were encouraged to learn independently. It could be the best alternative tool to help them in learning speaking skill effectively.

**Ways to Cope with the Challenges in Teaching Speaking during Online Learning**

Based on data analysis, 9 ways used by the teachers to cope the challnges, namely: upgrading internet connection, giving tutorial videos for the students in using learning platform, motivating the students, making WA group, preparing media, inviting the students to speak more, teaching to use the learning platform, giving flexible time and applying appropriate teaching method. Based on the identified challenges, the teachers had done some activities to overcome these challenges. The teachers had three challenges in teaching speaking via online learning, namely: lack of interaction, lack of knowledge about software for online learning, and lack of ways to apply various teaching method. The lack of interaction between the teacher and students were coped by providing more intensive communication between the teachers and students. Virtual meeting and making WhatsApp Group (WAG) were the activities done by teachers to cope this problem. Through virtual meeting, at least the teacher and students could see each other and communicate at the same time. Meanwhile WAG was utilized as a bridge for the teacher and students to communicate intensively within the period of teaching and outside of the school time. Concerning the lack of understanding about software for online learning, the teachers had done many discussions with their colleagues, watch YouTube and followed seminar or workshops that were available. In term of applying various teaching method, the teachers asked the students to get feedback about the teaching method that was applied by the teachers.

Actually, the teachers could use many teaching methods and media to support the students in learning speaking as practiced by Widiastuti et al. (2020) with mobile internet-based learning, Fay (2019) with Instagram Vlog, Endayani et al.( 2019) with WhatsApp Voice Note, and bin Tahir (2015) with Voice Chat.

From the students, there were some sources of problems namely, lack of students' understanding about used platform, lack of motivation, students' reluctancy to speak, and lack of responsibility to collect assignment. In order to help the students in understanding the functions of features in the used platform, the teachers made tutorial videos for the students. In some case, the teachers visited the students in order to show how to use the features. They also suggested some students to work/learn in group, so they could save their internet credit. This situation added challenges to the teachers because they have to teach the students about something outside the teaching material. This process took time and, in some point, frustrating both for the teachers and students. It also demotivated the students to follow the teaching learning process. Therefore, the teachers always motivated the students verbally in every meeting. However, this situation was considered not ideal for the teachers since all of the students were still not motivated to follow the speaking class. Actually, the teacher could use various activities such as Voice Chat. bin Tahir (2015) had proved that this application could increase the students' interest in joining speaking class, because of this fun and enjoyable media.

Other challenges from the students were reluctancy of speaking and lack of responsibility to collect assignment. As Garrison et al. (1999) one of the changes in online learning is social attitude. It happens because online learning has different characteristics from conventional teaching. In conventional teaching, the students meet directly with teacher so the teachers can control effectively. It forces the students to be active during tecahing and learning process. The teachers had to point some students in order to make them to speak. Although this way was not ideal, but it was effective to force the students to practice their speaking. It could be seen from students' performance of which it was not bad at all. The students, even some of them were good in speaking. Yet they were reluctant to speak because they were afraid of making mistakes or errors. The teachers always told them that making mistakes in speaking is a normal thing. As long as they want to keep practicing and improving their ability, as well as learn from their mistakes, they could be a good English speaker. In term of assignment submission, some students had difficulty to submit it on time. The most frequent reason was about internet connection and internet credit. For this reason, the teachers gave permission to submit it in another time. However, the teachers checked this reason to their parents. Fortunately, all of the parents said accordingly.

In terms of facilities, internet connectivity was not enough to support online learning. This problem was coped by the school. The school upgraded their internet connection twice to accommodate the teachers to do their online learning. The internet connection was in form of Wi-Fi connection. This situation made the teachers were eased to conduct online learning because they did not need to think again about finding reliable internet connection for their online learning. Lastly, the online learning system also became the challenge. For one session,

online learning was only done for 30 minutes. For this case, the teachers had tried to find the most suitable videos for their teaching speaking in online setting. Finding suitable video for the students in teaching was another challenge for the teachers. The duration should be suitable with the session time, containing the material being taught, as well as attractive for the students. Sometimes, the teachers should make their own video. Actually, the teachers could use other media than video, if they had difficulty to find the video. However, they had less opportunity to learn how to get or make the appropriate media for their teaching speaking in online setting.

**Strengths and the Weaknesses of the Strategy Used by the Investigated Teachers during Online Learning**

There are nine strengths and weaknesses of online teaching in SMAN 2 Abiansemal, namely : using high speed internet, providing videos for the students, always motivating the students to study, willing to help the students if they get challenges any time via WA, providing the students with interactive media, giving more reward to the students, increasing teaching skill done by the teachers, being flexible on time to submit assignment, and giving more detail and structured learning.

More challenges were faced by the teachers of SMAN 2 Abiansemal in teaching speaking in online. It is in line with Sun & Chen, 2016 who said that teaching speaking becomes one of the hardest parts to be taught in online because the interaction could not be done directly. Nuranda (2018) also said that speaking skill is also considered as the difficult skill, because it needs the process of practice by real time or face to face with others. This challenge was faced by the teachers who found that the students were reluctant to speak in online learning. Even they should point the students to speak. Besides that, the limited time of teaching online made the teachers could not provide enough feedback for the students. Whereas, teacher needs to fully guided the students to speak in good ways; emphasizing the accuracy, pronunciation, content, etc (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019 and Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). In terms of learning platform, the teachers had done an online learning because they used internet connection to access the Google Classroom, Moodle, and Melajah ID. It is in line with the definition of online learning proposed by Sakshi & Dhull (2019) who said that online learning is learning process which refer to the use of technologies, such as web, email, chat, discussion group, and video conferences by using internet connection.

In online learning, video can be used by the teachers to give pictures on the material learnt. The video helps the students to get interesting to the learning. Widiastuti et al. (2020) discover that the use of video in internet-based learning is effective in attracting the students' attention. The video gives them real pictures on what they have to do in speaking. It is real media for the students who can give them examples on how to speak well. However, it is of course little bit time consuming because the teachers should search videos relating to speaking materials. If the videos were not related, it may not bring optimum effect for the students' learning. Daryanto (2010) argues that video media is a very effective medium to help the learning process. Video

media is easy to understand its contents because it is a guide and explanation that is delivered directly with visual and sound.

The creative way of the teacher in teaching method is by making WA group for the students. It can be a tool for both students and teacher to share about their learning. It brings positive for the students if they have difficulty or need guidance. Nurazizah et al., (2019) discover that the positive response from most of the students toward that learning process and the teacher argued that this learning process is useful tool for the students to speak on narrative text easily, so that it could be concluded that WhatsApp voice note is an attractive teaching strategy to improve students' speaking skill. Learning is possible if there is ample interaction and it is a challenge for the teachers in online learning (Garrison et al., 1999). the teachers should make ample interaction with the students and by using WhatsApp group is a way to increase interaction. Since learning is in a distance, it is importance to arise or keep the students motivation. The finding shows that the students had lack of motivation during online learning so that keeping the students have important thing to be done. The success of online learning in speaking lies on the students' motivation because it can force the students to learn and to be confident on their learning (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). Motivation keeps the students learning so there is improvement in terms of in terms of the speaking grades, vocabulary, and listening skills. When the students are motivated in learning, they will push themselve to achieve something in learning.

## Conclusions and Suggestions

Teaching speaking in online class had faced some challenges. The source of the challenges are the teachers, the students, supporting facilities and learning system. However, those challenges can be cope by the teachers with some ways, one of them is innovation in teaching method. Eventhough the teaching method had weaknesses, in general it has strengths. Here, the teachers are suggested to always upgrade their knowledge in online learning so the problems can be solved. The management of school also should facilitates with more high speed internet to make learning more effective.

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