

ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHING VOCABULARY DURING ONLINE LEARNING IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to investigate English teachers' perceptions about teaching vocabulary during online learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic at junior high school. This research provides one research question: What is English teachers' perception about teaching vocabulary online learning? The study was conducted by using qualitative research as the research design. The participants of this study were the English teacher at Islamic Junior High School in Telukjambe Timur Karawang. The instruments used in this study were semi-structure interview for teachers. The findings of this study found three main themes regarding to the English Teachers' Perception about Teaching Vocabulary During Online Learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic: (1)The advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic, (2)The challenges of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic, (3)The innovation and strategy of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The result implies that the teachers had positive view of vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, students become easier, practical to be able to understand and follow vocabulary learning online because surely every English teacher will more creative to provide vocabulary learning materials through either from a video, picture that has been prepared complete with visual images along with clear writing and sound through various technological media (Google Classroom, Google Meet, E-learning, Youtube, WhatsApp etc.) that English teachers have learned before.

Keywords: English Teachers, Perception, Online Learning, Teaching Vocabulary, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

It has been two years of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, it is said that the COVID-19 pandemic can be a heartbreaking problem for the entire population of the world. therefore the COVID-19 outbreak has become a pandemic that has hit all over the world and it is transforming all sectors including education into a new world order. The COVID-19 pandemic has a severe impact on education as schools close their places and therefore the education sector changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The government informed through the Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 36962/MPK. A/HK/2020 on Learning Online and Working from Home to Prevent the Spread of the COVID-19 virus as an effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The learning system has certainly changed from face-to-face to online. The implementation of online learning is carried out in order to reach students from various regions. This aims to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus because it has an impact on the world of education, teachers are also forced to turn face-to-face learning into distance learning activities (Hastowohadi et al., 2020) and must follow the rules of health protocols set by the government. Therefore, online

education is the solution to continue the education process in the midst of the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

Vocabulary is a core component of language proficiency especially in English it provides many foundations for how well learners speak, listen, read, and write. Vocabulary mastery plays a very important role within the four language skills and it's to be thought of that vocabulary mastery is one of the required parts of the language (Susanto 2017). As we continue to grow and learn, our language grows with us to help understand the things we see in the communities around us and that is one of the language elements that must be learned and taught. Without having enough vocabulary, students will have difficulty knowing the meaning of what they hear and read and to express their purpose in understand and communication. It is known that having a limited vocabulary will restrict students from using English skills that include listening, writing, speaking, and reading. Although students master these skills but their vocabulary is low, it will be disruptive or they will not be able to improve their skills in English. This is the reason that vocabulary is an important component in English.

On the other hand, an English teacher in this era must have knowledge, creativity and innovation, especially in teaching vocabulary during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, English teachers may face some challenges in the online teaching process as there are some problems that will be faced in online learning such as; teaching materials, learning interactions, and learning environments (Fortune et al., 2011). Therefore teachers must be creative in creating and choosing the right techniques, media and activities in the classroom or through online especially in vocabulary teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years, several studies have been done dealing especially with English teachers' effectiveness, benefits, influence of online vocabulary pedagogy, use of online media in vocabulary learning and challenges amidst COVID-19 pandemic (DR Bailey, 2020; N Al Idris Saichun, 2020; Siti M, 2017; F Khodaparast, 2015; TL• Köse et al.'s, 2016). They found that the alteration of culture and condition amidst the COVID-19 pandemic affected to their the experience of challenges, effectiveness, benefits, and the influence of online vocabulary pedagogy as well as the use of online media in particularly on teaching and learning vocabulary online. The studies conducted to explore English Teachers' Perception particularly in teaching vocabulary during the COVID-19 pandemic are under-research. Therefore, to fill the void, this present study aimed to investigate English Teachers' Perception about Teaching Vocabulary during Online Learning in The COVID-19 Pandemic.

In addition, research on teaching and learning online has explored the views of problems faced whether it is about teaching technique problems or difficulties in operating online applications etc. Therefore through previous researches, the purpose of this study is to find out what is English teachers' perception of online learning especially on teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic and could also to understand how English teachers readiness in teaching vocabulary online learning, interesting to learn and explore the perception of teachers in teaching online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic. With this context, this study will examine English Teachers' perception on teaching vocabulary during online learning in the COVID-19 Pandemic.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative methodology and the type of research design used in this study is Interview Study Research. Richards (2009) explain that interview study is authors ask questions and collect answers as a form of exploring people's beliefs and experiences. Therefore, the author aims to explore perception in the form of interview told by participant. Due to covid-19 pandemic, the interview study research has been done virtually.

Site and Participants

The site of this study was a Islamic Junior High School in Indonesia. The source of data in this study was an English teacher from an Islamic school in Telukjambe Timur Karawang who was a participant in this study because the focus of this study was an English teacher. They spoke in Indonesian and Sundanese. The participants were familiar with vocabulary online learning. All participants have agreed to become volunteers in this study. Then the author chose two English teacher to be interviewed.

Instruments

The research instrument probably consists of fourteen questions for semi-structured interviews adopted from research conducted by Macías Sánchez (2015) and already adapted based on the focus of this research. The questions that have been compiled are interview guidelines to develop a deep understanding of the interests of this research topic, thus that the researcher does not deviate from the essence of the relevant topic.

Research Procedure

The data was collected through the interview technique. Firstly, the author attempted to find the appropriate participants among English teachers for this study according to the criteria that are necessary. When meeting the participants, the author explained the topic of this research and made an agreement with the participants. During the interview session, the author also asked the permission to took notes or record the interview. The took notes or record the interview will make the author easier to transcribing the data collected on the interview (Yin, 2011). After the data has been collected, the author analyzed the data through thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

After gathering the data, The data will be analyzed by using thematic analysis provided by Braun & Clarke (2006). Braun & Clarke (2006) assert that thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (p. 79). The steps of thematic analysis are familiarizing, coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes. The steps are explained as follows; (1) Familiarizing: the author became familiar with the data with re-read the data, such as teachers interview; (2) Coding: The author has coded each data item and ended this phase by collected all the codes and extracting the relevant data. The were managed so that there were no ambiguous data and reduced data that is not important; (3) Searching for themes: in this phase, the author was collected all coded data relevant to each theme. From this step, the author found and divided three themes from all the data (interview) that have been collected; (4) Reviewing themes: In this step, unnecessary data that has been taken from interviews will be deleted or reduced. The author reviews whether each theme is relevant to the data and begins to relate the relationships between the themes; (5) Defining and naming themes: the author identifies the 'essence' of each theme and arranges them by naming them briefly, concisely, and informatively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Three main themes were identified from teachers' interviews: (1)The advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic, (2)The challenges of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic, (3)The innovation and strategy of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

1. *The advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

For these two English teachers, they responded positively of course in the use of online vocabulary learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Both participants claimed that online vocabulary learning made students easier and able to understand by following the learning, for example through videos that had been prepared complete with visual images along with clear writing and sound by English teachers via E-learning, and these advantages for students can repeatedly playing the material that has been given by the English teacher via E-learning, therefore students have greater privileges in learning vocabulary online during Covid-19 pandemic.

Participant (1)

“The advantage of learning vocabulary online is that students are better able to understand by participating in learning through videos, for example through videos on YouTube.”

Participant (2)

“Actually learning vocabulary online is easier.. An automatic video has been prepared there and there are already visual images along with the writing, especially the voice is clear.. And other advantages can be played over and over again..”

Furthermore, the both participants also found that the technology media their used to teach online vocabulary to students during the Covid-19 pandemic varied in addition to through Google Classroom or E-learning their also used learning through Youtube and WhatsApp which one of the media was easily accessible to all students. But before spreading learning materials online their develop the technological literacy they have, especially in using some editing applications because before spreading the material their prepare the material their edit through video or photos.

Participant (1)

“The media I use in learning vocabulary is via Google Classroom and with E-learning (presented in the form of words and vocabulary learning videos).”

Participant (2)

“My focus is for distance learning only by using videos containing material through Youtube. Or if it's just an assignment, I usually use WhatsApp because WhatsApp is one of the media that is easily accessed by all students.”

Based on the interview, the author concludes that advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic it makes it easier for students to understand online vocabulary learning and students have the opportunity to see the material repeatedly that English teachers have given. Therefore English teachers have prepared vocabulary learning materials that they are trying to create using several editing applications and then carry out learning through several technologies such as Google Classroom, Youtube etc.

2. *The challenges of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic*

Both participants found challenges when their teaching vocabulary online. Their both explained that their have a problem with controlling students in understanding vocabulary learning, because their certainly do not know how well students understand and who students already

understand in vocabulary online learning described by English teachers. So the challenges to the experience of learning and teaching vocabulary online during the COVID-19 pandemic is were not maximal learning, their explained that students who collect assignments, do not necessarily really understand.

Participant (1)

“Of course, in teaching we have certain targets, including understanding vocabulary as well as its use, reading with correct pronunciation and learning to speak the basic language. Basically teaching language is the most interesting, because we can interact directly with students but because it is hindered by the Covid-19 pandemic. So the learning is not optimal, that may be the challenge.”

Participant (2)

“The challenge is more to control students in understanding and learning.. Because we don't know how much students understand what we are explaining.. Moreover, I also don't know which students really understand well or not.. students collect assignments, not necessarily they really understand.”

This challenge was explained by both participants that it caused difficulties that their had to deal with and face in preparing vocabulary learning materials online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their explain the difficulty in this online vocabulary learning challenge is on; Their can't listen clearly when students say vocabulary directly in Google meet also because of limited time and according to them do not have the freedom to listen to students' difficulties in expressing the correct pronunciation. Basically the most common difficulty, when their teach vocabulary online, there are still students who do not understand how to say every vocabulary. Even though each student has been given video material learning with a clear sound.

Participant (1)

“Yes, the problem is that we can't teach directly, because in language learning we have to interact directly with students, we can't hear them say words directly in Google Classroom, time is limited and we don't have the freedom to listen to students' difficulties in expressing the correct pronunciation.”

Participant (2)

“The most common difficulty, when teaching vocabulary online, students do not understand how to pronounce each word. Even though it has been given a video material with sound.”

In this challenge of teaching vocabulary online their must definitely prepare a material for the students before learning begins. In these both participants their explained that in preparation for this online vocabulary learning activity although not as maximum as learning directly, their usually go directly to the stage of delivering learning materials through documents (vocabulary or learning videos related to learning materials) of course with a clear explanation and their in addition to making videos also create power points then edit them and upload them to be distributed to the students.

Participant (1)

“Before stepping into the learning material, I usually give vocabulary using the drilling method or repeat until the student is correct in it words and can put it in perfect sentences. After that, I just entered into learning materials, but in the covid 19 pandemic period is not maximal with drilling methods usually I go directly to the learning material by conveying material through documents (words or learning videos related to learning materials) of course with a clear explanation.”

Participant (2)

“Difficult. I have to prepare more like making videos.. Making power point then editing. After that it must be uploaded.”

According to the statement of the both participants, it could be concluded that challenges of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic it's about the problem of controlling students to understand vocabulary learning, because they are don't know how well students are and who students already understand online vocabulary learning. And while these both participations teach them sometimes there are obstacles, not being able to listen clearly when students pronounce vocabulary in expressing the correct pronunciation directly through Google meet, that's why it's likely because there is limited time. Therefore in this case both participants explained that in the preparation for this online vocabulary learning activity although not maximal such as direct learning, they are strive to convey the learning material be it through photo documents, videos or create PPT (Power Points) that have been created and given to students so that students better understand about vocabulary learning.

3. The innovation and strategy of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the innovation carried out both participation in attracting the attention of students to be interested in learning with online vocabulary learning during the COVID-19 pandemic teach by them are; with them giving new things to students by way of PPT (Power Point) that their edited or made with cute animations or their prepare artificial video content from their edits where their try to make it as interesting as possible so that students become curious and willing to learn vocabulary that has been given by English Teachers. So basically English Teachers must be very creative teachers and should try to innovate in creating content vocabulary learning materials online in this Covid-19 pandemic through the technology they have learned and used, such as PPT, Video etc.

Participant (1)

"We always innovate and give new things to students with PPT (interesting and not boring slides) or by playing English vocabulary learning videos."

Participant (2)

"The innovation that I give to students in teaching vocabulary online is by preparing various video content, or creating interesting content through PPT and then editing it as interesting as possible so that students are interested in becoming curious about the learning that I provide."

Both participants explained that the innovations and strategies their have tried and provided to them teach online vocabulary learning in the COVID-19 pandemic to students, their tell that at least students can follow vocabulary learning online and can also do assignments. Assignments given by teachers well or that through PPT / Video, Picture, Google meet, or WhatsApp features. So that teachers can assess student learning outcomes during the distance learning period the Covid-19 pandemic.

Participant (1)

"At least students can participate in online learning and do the tasks given by the teacher, usually to facilitate the assessment of student work I suggest students to submit assignments via WhatsApp by taking photos or collecting assignment books (student worksheets/LKS to school towards the end semester)."

Participant (2)

"If you see the results, it's not optimal.. Because not all students follow, with various obstacles for example: students can only access WhatsApp and even then WhatsApp chat.."

According to the interview result, the both participants facing students with several innovation and strategy of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic with them giving new things for students by creating interesting video or PPT (Power Point) content by slipping cute animations so that students become interested in learning vocabulary with video content or PPT (Power Point) provided by English teachers. Both participants explained that the innovations and strategies they are had tried to teach online vocabulary learning in the

Covid-19 pandemic to students, that at least students can follow vocabulary learning online and can also do assignments given by teachers be it through PPT (Power Point) / Video, Pictures, Google meet, or WhatsApp features. Therefore, in both participants as English teachers they must be more creative and able to innovate to give ideas in creating interesting vocabulary learning material content both through the technology they learn and use, such as PPT (Power Point), Picture, Video, Youtube, WhatsApp, Google meet etc.

Discussion

1.) The advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic The findings show that of the research project revealed both participants responded positively towards english survival vocabulary online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in the advantage of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants indicated that the vocabulary online learning advantages especially for students to gain during the COVID-19 pandemic is that students become easier and can understand by following learning. Dolize (2012) explained that the advantages of online distance learning, one of which is very convenient, exams can be passed anytime, anywhere and can help improve english skill knowledge. Moreover each English teacher provides vocabulary learning materials through videos that have been prepared complete with visual images along with clear writing and sound by through various technological media. Therefore, students have the privilege of learning vocabulary online during the COVID-19 pandemic, as students have the advantage of so much that students can repeatedly play the content of vocabulary materials that English teachers have provided.

Although the advantages in the technology media their use to teach online vocabulary to students during the COVID-19 pandemic is varied, in addition to using E-learning, Google Classroom or Google Meet their also use Youtube and WhatsApp which one of these media is easily accessible to all students. The advantages of teaching vocabulary online learning in this study was also found in the study of F Khodaparast (2015). This study found that online learning also has a significant influence on improving vocabulary achievement. Thus, online learning aided by technology media can help English teachers create a more creative learning atmosphere and streamline the teaching and learning process. Therefore, before teachers spread vocabulary learning materials online, their developed the technological literacy their had, especially in using several editing applications. For the reason why both participants can prepare vocabulary learning materials and edit the vocabulary materials their provide to students first, is because their receive distance learning training by school operators using various applications so that online vocabulary learning atmosphere runs smoothly even though there is still a COVID-19 pandemic.

2.) The challenges of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic The findings show that both English teachers have challenges. But when their taught vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, both English teachers found challenges when their taught vocabulary online learning. According to Gillett-Swan (2017), “The online environment also presents challenges for many academic staff who increasingly require higher levels of technological competency and proficiency on top of their regular academic workload” (p. 20). Despite the challenges associated with online learning, with the rapidly growing COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc around the world, especially English Teachers must develop innovative solutions based on best practices to ensure that vocabulary learning goals and objectives even online are met. Moreover both participants explained that their had a problem in controlling students to understand vocabulary learning, English teachers certainly

did not know how well all students understood vocabulary learning online. So the challenges of learning and teaching vocabulary online in the COVID-19 pandemic are not necessarily all maximal.

In addition to the challenges felt by these both English teachers caused difficulties for them to face and prepared vocabulary learning materials online during the COVID-19 pandemic, in this study was also found in the study of DR Bailey (2020). This study found that the challenges of teaching English vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic possibility makes students 'become lazy' because in contrast to face-to-face learning it shows a topic of debate for English teaching, the challenge English teachers that expect for students is the presence and attention of students in online meetings to engage, that English teachers had prepared vocabulary learning materials so that students keep is not left behind learning materials. Moreover in this author study the difficulties in the ordinary challenges both participants find are; They are sometimes unable to listen clearly when students speak vocabulary directly in Google Classroom or Google Meet it is also because it may be a limited time, and the possibility of that causes them to have no freedom in listening to students' difficulties in expressing the vocabulary correct pronunciation. Therefore, the most common difficulty that English teachers feel when teaching vocabulary online, is that there may still be students who do not understand how to pronounce each vocabulary. Whereas every student has been given the content of learning video material with a clear sound.

Therefore, in this online vocabulary teaching challenge, every English teacher is required to have prepared the content of material that has been created or has been edited and prepared through documents, PPT (Power Point), photos or learning videos related to the material to be uploaded and shared to students before learning begins. This finding is related to the research conducted by Nazari, et. al (2017) who found to compare the use of PowerPoint slides for vocabulary learning to 100 EFL students in Iran. The results showed that students who used PowerPoint in learning vocabulary had significant differences compared to those who didn't use it. This suggests that power points can be used in vocabulary teaching. Power points can also display good visuals if packaged well. The high creativity of English teachers can create material displayed on power point slides. Although the preparation that has been prepared by English teachers is not like a maximal as direct learning but at least there are some students who easily directly understand the vocabulary learning materials online in this COVID-19 pandemic.

3.) The innovation and strategy of teaching vocabulary online learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The findings suggest that in the innovation and strategy of English teachers in teaching vocabulary learning online during the COVID-19 pandemic still exists, English teachers are trying to provide innovation, innovate in teaching vocabulary online especially to attract the attention of students, so that students are interested in learning vocabulary online during the COVID-19 pandemic. As it is known that there is a very wide variety of resources for learning vocabulary (Heilman, 2008). Of course, teachers are required to be more creative and have many ideas, innovations in providing a vocabulary learning material online during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the innovation provided by these both English teachers is by giving new things by making PPT (Power Point) that their edit with the addition of cute animations and English teachers also create video content that certainly attracts attention (students) where English teachers try to make video content as interesting as possible so that students become curious and of course want to learn vocabulary learning that has been prepared and given by English teachers.

Furthermore, the only strategy that English teachers can do is to provide vocabulary learning materials online, of course with interesting content where English teachers try to give new things to vocabulary learning materials whether it is through PPT (Power Point), Videos, Photos that has been given interesting things or good innovations so that students are interested and easy to understand the material that provided by English teachers. This study is connection with research conducted by Giovannella (2020) It was found that teachers had a positive perception of using technologies. The professional development of English teachers in digital skills is needed to prepare especially for future teaching vocabulary activities.

Therefore, the English teachers tell that the innovations and strategies that have been tried in their provide teaching on online vocabulary learning in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic to students, that at least students can follow vocabulary learning online and of course be able to do good assignments from the material provided by the English teacher even through interesting PPT (Power Point), Video, Images, Google Meet or WhatsApp features etc. This is an English teacher's strategy in assessing, teaching and dealing with students on online vocabulary learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

This present study aims to explore English Teachers' perception about teaching vocabulary during online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic. The results indicated that the both teachers had positive view of vocabulary during online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic, students become easier, practical to be able to understand and follow vocabulary learning online because surely every English teacher will provide vocabulary learning materials through either from a video, picture, photos that has been prepared complete with visual images along with clear writing and sound through various technological media (Google Classroom, Google Meet, E-learning, Youtube, WhatsApp etc.) that English teachers have learned before. Therefore, students have the privilege of learning vocabulary online during the COVID-19 pandemic, as students definitely have many advantages that students can repeatedly view and play the content of vocabulary materials that have been provided by English teachers. As well as for English teachers point out that this challenge causes teachers to become more creative and have more knowledge and experience to innovate in online vocabulary learning. Which is where they are have the skills in creating interesting content and providing new things through PPT (Power Point), Picture, Videos that they are make and edit with the addition of interesting cute animations and they are always try to create and prepare video content that is certainly interesting for the attention of students. Moreover English teachers always make the content as interesting as possible so that students become curious, interested and enjoy vocabulary learning online that has been prepared, provided by English teachers.

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