

## **Afghanistan EFL teachers' perception and practice on online learning during the covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia**

**Lestari Budianto<sup>1</sup>, Slamet Setiawan<sup>2</sup>, Pratiwi Retnaningdyah<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia,* <sup>2</sup>*Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia,* <sup>3</sup>*Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia*

\*) correspondence: [lestari.20016@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:lestari.20016@mhs.unesa.ac.id)

### **ABSTRACT**

Covid-19 has become a pandemic that forced EFL teachers to adjust themselves in the teaching and learning system. This pandemic affected not only Indonesian EFL teachers but also Afghanistan EFL teachers who were teaching English in Indonesia. This research investigated the perception and practice of Afghanistan EFL teachers on online learning during the covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This research used a qualitative approach. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Afghanistan EFL teachers in Indonesia. The result showed that online learning was difficult because of four aspects namely internet connection, digital devices problems, students' listening skills, and students' participation. Furthermore, this research recommended four optional solutions in helping the teachers teach English online during pandemic covid-19 in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Afghanistan Teachers; Perception; Online Learning

### **INTRODUCTION**

Covid-19 pandemic required almost all schools in Indonesia to change their teaching and learning system. The schools must follow online learning during the pandemic. The online learning system required the students to learn from home (Abidah et al., 2020). This situation forced both teachers and students to adapt to the system to conduct the education. This situation affected not only Indonesian EFL teachers but also Afghanistan ones. During the pandemic, the teachers should teach English through an online system (Mardiah, 2020). The Indonesian teachers may teach English using both English and Indonesian language but it is different from Afghanistan EFL teachers who do not use the Indonesian language. The Afghanistan EFL teachers were required to teach English using full English through the online system.

In the online system, the teachers and the students are separated. The students are learning the materials from their home as well as the teacher that is teaching from home. So, they are physically separated. The teaching and learning are using various applications integrated with Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The implementation of using technology can be a solution for the teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (Chun et al., 2016).

In some schools in Indonesia, the teaching of English is divided into two namely English class and conversation class which is more familiar as speaking class. In conversation class, the focus is on the use of English as a spoken language. In this class, the teachers are required to use the direct method or full English to train the student's listening skills (Ningsih, 2017). The teachers are required to train the students' speaking skills as well. In this class, foreign teachers are decided to handle the class. It will give the students motivation to use English only to communicate since the teachers are foreign and cannot speak the students' mother language (Mangendre, 2020).

Research related to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has been done by several researchers. The first research was entitled EFL Teachers' Perception on Online English Learning Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic at High Schools in Padang (Nursalina & Fitrawati, 2021). The result showed that the EFL teachers showed positive perceptions related to online learning. The second research was entitled Teachers' Perception of Online Learning during Pandemic Covid-19 (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). The result showed that the participants showed positive perceptions related to the usefulness of the online learning system but more than half of teachers did not agree with the effectiveness. The third research was entitled English teachers' perspectives on challenges, suggestions, and materials of online teaching amidst the global pandemic (Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2021). The result showed that poor internet connection became the barrier during the teaching process and the ease of access to online teaching materials and applications that were required. The research did not explore Afghanistan EFL teachers' perception and practice of online teaching. Therefore, this research is intended to investigate Afghanistan EFL teachers' perception and practice of online teaching English in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

This research investigated Afghanistan EFL teachers' perception and practice on online learning during the covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Descriptive qualitative research was chosen to portray, summarize, and represent an in-depth understanding of an ongoing phenomenon (Barnes, 2017; Yin, 2011). This research would reveal the teachers' perception and practice by contextualizing the data gained. Contextualizing the data was a crucial aspect of qualitative research (Mattimoe et al., 2021).

This research was conducted at Islamic Junior High School of Amanatul Ummah that was located in Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia with two Afghanistan EFL teachers as the subjects of the research. The data was collected from written reflection and semi-structured interviews. Written reflection is a template containing a set of instructions (Barkhuizen, 2014). Written reflection was chosen because the subjects might give an intelligible response (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Through written reflection, the subjects of this research would freely produce their answers and responses based on their experience related to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The next step was semi-structured interviews. The subjects were interviewed by the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjects' perception and practice of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through these semi-structured interviews, new ideas and questions are allowed to come up during the interview. This kind of interview is beneficial since the guidance would be in the hand of the researcher and it is still possible to extend for new issues to raise during the interview (Nugroho & Rekha, 2020). The subjects of this research were two Afghanistan EFL teachers who were teaching conversation subject -speaking class- using an online system. The data gained from written reflection and semi-structured interviews were coded, reviewed, analyzed, and integrated as reflections of the two subjects of the research which led to the conclusions. The result then was presented in the results and discussion section of this paper.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Generally, the Afghanistan EFL teachers found some difficulties in teaching conversation subject -speaking class- using an online system. The poor internet connection became the big problem faced during teaching and learning online. The internet connection that was not stable made the teaching and learning worked unwell. When the teacher was explaining something, some students were out of the zoom application due to the poor internet connection and had to rejoin the zoom meeting and missed some of the information explained by the teachers.

SHK (Afghanistan EFL Teacher) wrote in written reflection: Unstable internet connection made my students out and in several times.

During the teaching, the students felt more difficult to understand what the teacher said because of the full English and online system.

AWG (Afghanistan EFL Teacher) wrote in written reflection: My students requested me to use google translate to translate what I have said in the Indonesian language because they felt difficult to understand what I am saying in English. In Offline class, they felt it easier because they can interact directly with and guess my gesture.

Students' participation during online learning became another issue. The students' participations were not the same as in the offline class. Some students got their cameras off and just listened rather than participated in the teaching and learning.

AWG (Afghanistan EFL Teacher) in interview session: My students tend to be silent and do not participate actively in the online class. It seems they can turn off the camera and do another activity. They do not focus on studying just like in offline class because they are at home and they have family members who become disruptors like their little sisters and brothers.

The teaching and learning using an online system are quite different from the offline one. Some conditions made online learning boring. The boringness became the next issue that the Afghanistan EFL teachers had to face during teaching and learning.

SHK (Afghanistan EFL Teacher) in interview session: I think it is quite boring using the online system because I cannot use some educational games just like what I did in offline class. The students may only interact virtually by speaking and looking at the screen with me and their friends. In offline class, they can interact, do some physical activities together, laugh, and have fun. It is not easy to make the online class fun.

The school did not provide training both for teachers and students in using online teaching and learning platform. The skills in using digital devices and applications for teaching and learning are not enough to implement online teaching and learning. In other words, online teaching and learning are handled by the teachers based on their own decision in using the platforms.

SHK (Afghanistan EFL Teacher) in interview session: Some students do not have a handphone or laptop. So, they use their parents' digital devices. They need to install some platform used and they are not familiar with their parents' handphones or laptops while their parents are at work and cannot help them in preparing the platform. I have to guide my students in installing some applications and use them. It takes time. The applications are limited to the most common application for video conferences. We often use zoom and WhatsApp for teaching and learning online.

The result showed that there were several problems the Afghanistan EFL teachers faced on online teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The first issue was the internet connection that made the students in and out several times. The second issue was the listening skill of the students since the teaching and learning is held using full English as the requirement of conversation subject - speaking class- moreover it is using an online system. The third issue was the students' participation. The students tend to be silent and just listen to what the teachers explained while the fourth issue was the boringness during the teaching and learning. The last issue was the lack of skills in using digital devices and online platforms. Those problems made it the teachers and students quite difficult to have effective teaching and online learning.

This paper explored the perception and practice of Afghanistan EFL teachers on online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The previous research explored Indonesian EFL teachers on online learning (Efriana, 2021; Nartiningrum & Nugroho, 2021; Nursalina & Fitrawati, 2021; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). This paper showed that Afghanistan EFL teachers had more problems related to the listening skills of the students since the teaching and learning should be held using an online platform and full English as the requirement of conversation subject -speaking class- while the students were in Junior High level that most of them need lots of improvement in listening skills.

## CONCLUSION

This research showed Afghanistan EFL teachers' perception and practice of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The teachers had to face several problems related to the internet connection, listening skills of the students, students' participation, teaching and learning boringness, and skills in using digital devices used during teaching and learning in conversation subject or speaking class. The problems were quite irritating in conducting online teaching and learning effectively.

Providing a good and stable internet connection will be very beneficial in conducting and effective online teaching and learning. It is also suggested to improve the students' listening skills and simplify the teachers' language to help the students understand more in conversation subject or speaking class. The teachers should find effective and creative ways in teaching to decrease the boringness of the students and to get the students engaged and participate more actively during the online teaching and learning. Related to the skills in using digital devices, the school should provide training for both teachers and students in using digital devices and online platforms to conduct a more effective online teaching and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

For the further researcher, it is suggested to conduct similar research but in different education levels since this research focused on the level of Junior High School level. The subjects of the research can be chosen differently from this research since the subjects of this research were two Afghanistan EFL teachers who are non-native English speakers. Further research is suggested to choose native English teachers as the subjects of the research or teachers from different countries.

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