

## **Teacher's Online Learning Strategy for Teaching English during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Farida <sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Nafi Annury<sup>2</sup>**

Walisongo State Islamic University<sup>1,2</sup>

[\*faridaruela.fs@gmail.com\*](mailto:faridaruela.fs@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [\*nafi.annury@walisongo.ac.id\*](mailto:nafi.annury@walisongo.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

In early 2020, Indonesia was infected with coronavirus. The Indonesian government implemented an online education system to combat the coronavirus's spread. This transition to the learning system causes a change in teaching strategy, as the learning process has shifted from the classroom to the online environment. This study determines teachers' strategies for teaching English via online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and the effectiveness of that strategy in teaching English via the online learning system. We use the descriptive qualitative method in this study. Two English teachers at SMK Wisudha Karya Kudus were the subjects of this study. Interviews, observation, and documentation were used to elicit data. The data was analysed by collecting, condensing, displaying, and concluding. Two English teachers at SMK Wisudha Karya Kudus were the subjects of this study. The findings showed English teachers used various strategies when teaching English online during the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategies included indirect learning strategies, time management, technology, engaging learning media, and developing communication with students. These strategies are highly beneficial to teachers in teaching with technological tools and learning applications. Using videos to teach can help students avoid boredom, and these strategies can also assist students in achieving learning goals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Online Learning Strategy, Teaching English*

### **Introduction**

Learning a foreign language is very important in today's globalization, especially learning English. The international community uses English as a tool for global communication. As an international language, the education system in Indonesia requires middle and high school students to learn English, and they must pass the English exam to pass. Learning English enhances the status and opportunities of individuals in education, technology, global commerce, and business. According to Diana Petruta (2012), Learning English has many benefits: among others, it can appreciate the culture and context of a country.

Education in Indonesia seemed to be significantly affected by the current era of the COVID pandemic. The condition prompted the government to declare a state of emergency known as "Lockdown" for about two years from 2020. Schools were closed to reduce the spread of COVID. The government offers online learning programs as a face-to-face learning solution in schools. Implementing online learning is also carried out by all Educational Institutions in Indonesia. This online learning activity solves helping students learn at home. Starting from kindergarten to university have implemented this online program comprehensively.

Multimedia plays a vital role in combining text, images, sounds, and videos in multi-sensory interactive applications or presentations to convey information to the reader, listener, or viewer. When used to enhance the learning experience, multimedia combines audio, visuals, and video elements to create a richer, more engaging, and ultimately more effective learning environment. Using media as a learning tool for students becomes essential to provide a sense of comfort

and interest in participating in the learning process to be more efficient in the learning process at school. In addition, the media plays an essential role in helping teachers deliver materials and increasing students' interest in learning. Various forms of learning media help teachers in the teaching and learning process. First, the teacher must choose the medium for the existing subject. English teachers often use media to assist in the learning process. Media is the intermediary between the teacher's concept and the student's understanding of the material being taught.

In schools, we have listed the practice of learning to use multimedia as a means in the daily lesson plan (RPS). They use the media as a teaching tool in English classes. The application of multimedia can add new excitement and fun to the educational experience. The teachers expose students to various activities. Teachers need to use their imagination by choosing a teaching medium that suits students' curriculum requirements and interests. Teachers use multimedia-based teaching methods to motivate students to learn effectively and enjoyably. Teachers find it easier to relate the material they teach to the context they will use when using the media.

The research problems raise in this paper as follows:

1. What kind of strategies are implemented during the online learning in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. To what extent can this strategy help teachers in online learning in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## **Literature Review**

English is an effective communication tool as a foreign language for people used for learning materials in schools or public places as a language of instruction in other countries (Harmer, 2004). After all, students do not apply English in their daily social lives. Means EFL has no social and communicative function in a society where English is learned because English here is not used as the primary language in communicating and interacting socially. *English* is a foreign language used worldwide globally to communicate with people worldwide. For Indonesian, English is one of the foreign languages. However, people communicate daily in their mother tongue. Therefore, as a foreign language, the Indonesian government puts English within the national education curriculum, so students in Indonesia are required to learn English. Thus, English is learned from the elementary school level to the university level.

Language teaching can be successful if there is sufficient knowledge of the characteristics and behavior of students. In a teaching and learning process, there are always students who can receive subject matter easily and students who find it difficult to receive subject matter well. This is caused by various factors, one of which is the method or strategy used to learn. In this case, Naiman et al, (1978) stated that "all forms of language teaching can be developed properly if we have sufficient knowledge about learning and the teaching and learning process itself."<sup>1</sup> Thus, knowledge of the characteristics of students will help in facilitating teaching and learning activities so that students can achieve maximum results.

An understanding of knowledge of students' characteristics, backgrounds, and behaviors can be a benchmark for succeeding the language teaching. There are several kinds of characteristics of students in learning in their environment. For example, students understand the lesson easily, and some find it challenging to learn to understand the subject matter effectively and efficiently. Many things cause these problems, including strategies or methods used in the learning process. Language teaching can develop well if we have sufficient knowledge and competence to develop the learning process (Naiman, 1978). Therefore, knowing the characteristics of students will play a role in developing the teaching and learning process for the student's success.

### *Teaching Strategy*

In order to achieve the primary goal of learning, it requires the right way or strategy as well. The things to note in the learning process are "what" to use for learning and "how" to use it. However, humans have many strategies when they learn languages, some of these strategies can be used effectively, but others cannot. For the main learning goals to be achieved, a student must be able to choose the right strategy for learning.

Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations". Then, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined learning strategies as "techniques and devices used by second language learners for remembering and organizing samples of the second language. One of the ways learners become actively involved in controlling their own learning is by using strategies." Strategies are the thoughts and behavior that learners use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain information". So, the strategy is used so that students can learn more easily and can achieve learning goals. We can conclude that a learning strategy is a technique or method used to make learning easier.

Students take specific actions to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more independent, more effective, and more transferable to new situations (Oxford, 1990). Students can learn by using specific strategies to become actively involved in their learning activities. Strategies play an essential role in learners' thoughts, and behaviors to help them understand, learn, or store information." So, we can conclude that learning strategies consist of techniques or methods used to facilitate learning styles.

### *Online Learning Media*

Online learning includes various technologies related to the internet such as the worldwide web such as e-mail, chat, new groups and texts, and meeting with audio and video delivered via computer networks to provide lessons. It can help students to learn comfortably because they can choose their speed in learning. Online learning requires a lot of resources and careful planning. In this context, educators position themselves as facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge content, and it is considered a resource that can enhance student learning experiences.

Several following points that are needed to be considered in carrying out online learning include: using various technologies such as e-mail, chatting, text media, audio-visual, and computers to deliver lessons. The application of this learning media results in students learning comfortably because the media is following their learning style. Sufficient resources in the implementation of online learning will significantly support the success of the learning process. In this context, educators take on the role of facilitators rather than transmitters of knowledge content to enhance the student's learning experience.

### **Methodology**

In this study, the authors used descriptive qualitative research. It focuses on the teacher's strategy in online learning while teaching English. This research aims to describe the strategies and techniques used by teachers in teaching English in online classes at SMK Kudus, Central Java, Indonesia. This research was conducted at the end of September 2021. In collecting data, researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with respondents by local protocols from the government to stay safe from exposure to the coronavirus. There were two English teachers in SMK Kudus as participants. The Data collection techniques were used observations, interviews, and documentation.

### **Result and Discussion**

According to teacher 1 statement, she said that students experienced a decrease in their interest in learning English while switching to online learning. Because they are not used to using online learning systems, the abrupt shift of the online learning system is difficult for both teachers and students.

Furthermore, the lack of teacher monitoring contributes to the decline in student interest in learning because learning is done online, so teachers and students cannot meet in person, and teaching and learning activities are done through an electronic network. This causes students to feel liberated and lose sight of their responsibilities. She employs four strategies to teach English at SMK Kudus to keep teaching and learning activities running smoothly.

The first interviewee is with “Ani” S.Pd. (Teacher1). She is an English teacher at SMK Kudus. KT1 teaches 9th-grade students at SMK Kudus. According to first teacher’s statement, he is well receptive to the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning despite the sudden change. According to teacher statement, she said that students experienced a decrease in their interest in learning English while switching to online learning.

The rapid shifting of the online learning system is indeed difficult for both teachers and students because they are not used to using online learning systems. In addition, the lack of monitoring from the teacher is also a factor causing the decline in student interest in learning because learning is carried out online so teachers and students cannot meet in person, and teaching and learning activities are carried out through an electronic network. This causes students to feel free and forget their responsibilities as a student.

The first strategy is timed management. In time management, she arranges time according to student activities. because in a pandemic the time used to teach is less than face-to-face lessons, so teachers must be smart in managing time when teaching so that the teaching and learning process can be carried out properly. In terms of time management, it has actually been regulated by the school, namely the existence of a learning schedule. This means that teachers are free to choose whether or not to follow the schedule set by the school. She still uses the schedule given by the school to teach but he does not use the schedule related to student assignments. She uses the entire learning schedule to deliver the material only. So, she gives leeway in collecting assignments because he knows that the pandemic period is not an easy time, he doesn't want to give a heavy burden to students so students don't have to submit assignments on the same day. The second strategy is technology use. Most of the teaching-learning done by online. in consequence, capability of the technology as a means of learning process should be credible to support entire activities. So, must use technology as a tool to support online learning so that the teaching and learning process continues to run well. In this case, the technological tools used are as follows: smartphones, laptops and the internet. In online learning, every student must be able to operate the supporting technology such as a laptop or smartphone.

The third, using interesting media for learning. The rapid shifting of the learning system from traditional to digital learning in the pandemic era resulted several consequences to the educational system. Using multimedia in learning process encourages teacher to be more creative and efficient. Most of students getting more influenced in certain topic if the teacher may attract and arousing their students’ attention. Teachers may apply YouTube, google classroom, WhatsApp, zoom, telegram and many more. During this online learning, she uses WhatsApp, google classroom, YouTube, and google meet as learning media.

She used the WhatsApp as medium to communicate their daily activities during the learning process. Therefore, she also used Google Classroom. The Google Classroom used as the main media in teaching so, all learning activities are carried out in Google Classroom. Starting from being absent, explaining the material, assignments to exams carried out in Google Classroom. First, she announced the further information via WhatsApp group about time schedules given. Later, students acquired to be present his attendance from google classroom. In explaining the materials, he sent a video link from YouTube, which contains an explanation of the subject

matter in Google Classroom. Then students opened the link and watched the video till the end. In addition to explaining the material with videos, he also used a voice recorder to teach. For example, a teaching strategy to improve students' listening comprehension, he used a voice recorder to teach. He gave examples for examples in teaching the materials for expression self-congratulation, hope, and wish expression, there is intonation and how to read that must be emphasized to students so he gave an example of how to pronounce the expression correctly, namely by recording the voice using a voice recorder and then sending it to google classroom. YouTube used as the media to upload videos created by teacher. She used asynchronous media to give further explanation via on YouTube anyway. This video was edited attractively and contains attractive explanation to all the material in a brief and concise so that students easily understood the teacher's explanation. By making interesting videos with easy-to-understand explanations with the aim of attracting students' interest in learning. After making a video, she uploaded the video on YouTube, and then she shared the video through Google Classroom by copying the video link from YouTube. The fourth medium, that she uses is google meet. She often used to google meet to teach, either to held a quiz. It can be assumed implementing of google meet to check students' understanding the material had done so far.

The fourth strategy sustains a good communication between teachers and students via online. The way how to communicate each other can be used the WhatsApp application as a medium. Teachers communicated with the members of all group intensively every time. Using WhatsApp is valuable for many purposes to support the daily communication. Teachers sent further information and checking the condition for instance.

#### Second Teacher Strategy (Teacher 2)

The second interviewee is "Asri" S.Pd. (Teacher 2) she is an English teacher at SMK Kudus. She teaches 10th and 11th graders. We know that there were many problems faced by her in conducting online learning. She felt online learning was not effective because teachers cannot monitor students directly, so students felt losing on participating in online learning.

Because learning was done online, students lack of experience decreased their interest in learning English. The lack of supportive environment and supervision affected students' performance. Similar to the first respondent, Teacher 2 used WhatsApp connection to communicate with her students. She also created a WhatsApp group in her class. Delivering information, checking students' participation and sending the tasks were the examples of WhatsApp application for educational tool. She usually explained the materials in the WhatsApp group by using a voice note by recording her voice and then sending it by WhatsApp group to get easier to listen the explanation.

Besides, she also used Google Classroom as a medium for teaching. Sending video links for explaining the materials from YouTube. Moreover, giving additional narration through videos was needed to make understandable explanation so far. Providing important notes about several points in the material given to students and giving students' tasks to be acquired through google classroom to check how far students' proficiency. Second, build a good communication with students via online. According to her statement, she also used WhatsApp to give important announcements to students and to contact parents of students who have not done assignments and fill out attendance lists. It means that she used the WhatsApp application as a tool to communicate with her students. She also had the student's parents' phone numbers to check and supervised students' assignments. Third, namely the management of time. Here, same as teacher 1's, she run her own schedule when conducting the weekly teaching-learning. She gave flexibility to students in submitting assignments. And she encouraged students to fill out attendance lists and submit assignments. Fourth, using technology. To apply online media, of course, you need electronic tools. The electronic devices commonly used are smartphones and computers. Without electronic tools, online learning cannot be carried out.

According to second teacher's statement, the strategies used so far can help in teaching English using an online learning system and can assist her in assessing students' learning abilities. The extent of these strategies can help the teacher in teaching English during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the two interviewees, the strategies used so far are very helpful in online teaching and assessing students' abilities.

### **Conclusion**

The time management that has been implemented so far is very helpful for teachers to teach English. students can do assignments to the maximum because students have a lot of time to work on and students can discuss longer with the teacher during learning because the learning schedule is used to convey material and discuss. The use of technology during online learning is very helpful for teachers in teaching English during the covid-19 pandemic. According to Andersons (2008) in online learning learners use some form of technology (usually computers) to access learning materials, learners use technology to interact with tutors or instructors and with other learners, and some form of support is provided to learners.<sup>2</sup> So technology is very important in online learning. Using interesting learning media. The use of interesting learning media is enough to help teachers in teaching English because this strategy is enough to attract students' interest in learning so that students can learn well and enjoyably. Building communication with students is quite helpful in teaching English because this strategy in addition to strengthening the relationship between teachers and students can also attract all students to keep learning even though learning is carried out online.