# TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE ON STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT DURING PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY IN A HIGH SCHOOL IN EAST JAVA

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## Abstract

Pandemic has affected all sectors, including education. The teaching and learning activities are shifted from traditional method learning. Indonesia is one of the countries which recently implemented online learning due to Covid-19 which forces teachers to do the teaching and learning process at home. This teaching mode is new for both teachers and students. Therefore, for both experiences challenges and one of them is student disengagement. This study is intended to investigate the teacher's perspective on student engagement particularly in language learning. In addition, the researcher also explores the teacher's teaching strategies, learning and face-to-face classes during the pandemic to overcome student disengagement and eventually achieve the learning. The research employs qualitative research by using observation, interview, and document analysis to obtain the data. The participants are English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang. The results portray the nature of student engagement in this school. Moreover, creative and innovative teaching strategies have been implemented to overcome some challenges faced.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, online learning, teaching mode

## Introduction

Currently, the entire country is facing a pandemic that has claimed many lives. The cause of this pandemic is Coronavirus Disease 2019 or better known as COVID-19. December 2019 was the beginning of the reporting of these cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province with reports of mysterious pneumonia cases (Rothan & Byrareddy 2020). WHO initially named this virus 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), then on February 11, 2020 WHO announced a new name, namely Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2 virus). In Indonesia, this virus was very shocking at the beginning of 2020 and by the end of 2019, there were found 65 countries had been exposed to this virus (Perhimpunan Dokter Paru Indonesia, 2020). According to WHO (2020a) as of March 2, 2020, there were 90,308 people infected with this virus with a death rate of 3,087 people. Meanwhile, as of March

30, 2020, there were 693,224 cases and 33,106 deaths worldwide. The worst cases are in Europe and North America because the cases and deaths have surpassed China. The United States is in first place with the most Covid-19 cases and an additional 19,332 new cases on March 30, 2020, followed by Spain with 6,549 new cases. Italy has the highest mortality rate in the world, which is 11.3% (WHO, 2020b). In Indonesia, this outbreak continues to be in the spotlight because it takes many lives every day and Indonesia has the highest number of cases in Southeast Asia (Susilo et al. 2020). Therefore, the government has done many ways to break the chain of spreading the virus. Starting from distance learning, working from home, and implementing health protocols, and limiting community activities carried out in order to reduce the death rate due to Covid-19 in Indonesia.

Based on the above case, all community activities become disturbed and this is related to all areas of life. One of them is education. In education, the whole process of direct teaching and learning must be stopped and replaced with a distance learning process that utilizes online learning. This learning method is carried out by all schools so that students still get material like in school. So in this case the teacher must have a strategy in teaching because there are differences in methods from traditional methods to online learning methods. This is intended so that students still get learning material and understand the material that has been given by the teacher even though learning is done remotely. In this case also the role of the teacher is indeed very important because it functions as a guide who delivers and transfers teaching materials in the form of knowledge as well as students who act as learners, while the teaching material delivered by the teacher is information or messages that students must learn to understand, lived it in, and practiced it as a provision for completing his studies later. In this online learning, teachers must maximize the use of technology as a means of teaching media. Because in the middle of online learning, technology has a very important and strategic role in helping to achieve effective and efficient learning goals. However, online learning which began since the pandemic, of course, has many obstacles in its application. So in this case, it raises a lot of teacher perspectives on online teaching related to the process, strategies used, and the obstacles faced, of course, directly related to student engagement during learning in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Teacher's perspective

In online learning, the teacher has an important role in its implementation. Because the teacher is directly related to the delivery of material to students. However, in the process of implementing online learning in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the obstacles were encountered so that teachers must have a teaching strategy that adapts to the conditions of students. Therefore, teachers' perspectives have emerged to create creativity and innovation in the teaching methods they use during this online learning. The perspective itself is assumed by Mezirow (2018) as a cultural and psychological structure that alters new experiences based on a person's past. In the application of online learning, of course the teacher has experience teaching based on the traditional methods they have and are commonly applied in schools. The existence of innovation in the use of technology media in online learning is a perspective that is explored based on the teaching strategy of the teacher.

### *Student disengagement*

As previously said, online learning is not easy and of course many obstacles will be encountered, one of which is student disengagement. Of course, this student disengagement grabbed the teacher's attention because it was related to the acceptance of the material he provided. According to Sharma et al. (2019) the primary school level, indicators of disengagement include: not paying attention, not completing school assignments, disruptive behaviour, withdrawal, low achievement, truancy and refusing to go to school, and this is a problem in community life because it is related to failure in elementary school. Trout in (Chipchase et al. 2017) considering student disengagement are shown by traits such as being unaffected, detached, indifferent, alienated, upset, and hostile to describe students who are not involved in learning or can be said to be passive. In online learning that has only been implemented during the pandemic, it is a task for teachers because of course there are obstacles that come from the students themselves. Like student engagement and disengagement related to material acceptance, student activity, or student adaptation to the media used. Therefore, in this study the author tries to dig deeper into how the strategies used by teachers in the learning process in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and what factors are related to student disengagement, as well as what solutions are given by the teacher to overcome obstacles encountered during online learning.

### Method

This study uses a qualitative method. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach which is the topic of discussion. This shows that qualitative research studies natural things, tries to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning that people bring to them. In qualitative research, data collection is required based on case studies of empirical material, personal experiences, introspective, life story interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - which describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in an individual's life. This study uses interview guidelines as a research instrument. Interviews were conducted by the author to informants, the English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang. The primary source of the data that the authors got came from the results of interviews and supporting literature as secondary sources which then the authors analyzed in descriptive form.

### Findings and Discussion

In answering this research, the authors obtain and describe the results of the research that the authors get from interviews conducted with English teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang. Based on the interview data that the writer got related to the teacher's perspective on student engagement, it was found that in his perspective the teacher relied on various effective ways to continue to provide lessons to his students. Along with this continuous online learning, SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang teachers are trying to make a lot of difference between online learning and offline learning. In addition, as a teacher, educating students must be in accordance with the applicable curriculum. Moreover, there are differences in the curriculum during a pandemic with the curriculum applied during a pandemic. So according to the sEnglish teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang, there are some materials that have

changed, such as in two semesters there are 12 materials, must be reduced, so that the teacher must be smart and able to anticipate this online learning method.

In this case, we know that the teacher plays an important role in the implementation of learning because the teacher is directly related to the delivery of material to students. However, the difference in the curriculum used during this pandemic inevitably makes teachers have to change the learning strategy as effectively as possible, as said by the English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang. This raises a separate perspective for teachers regarding teaching strategies. As said by Mezirow (2018) a cultural and psychological structure that alters new experiences based on a person's past. Changing online learning methods to be as effective as possible is certainly not an easy thing. The teacher must know what the condition of the student is and the situation in the field when implementing online learning. This is because later it will be related to students' understanding in absorbing the material.

In this case, the teacher certainly uses learning media as a tool in their learning strategy. In modern times like today, the use of tools such as *google classroom*, *google meet*, *zoom*, and *e-learning* that are owned by schools is very helpful for teachers in teaching and learning activities. Because these applications are a medium of contact and also a means of communication between teachers and students in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. In its use, the English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang uses it as effectively as possible. For example, the learning method is generally replaced by using other learning media so that students are not monotonous listening to material from the teacher which will cause boredom. But of course this online learning cannot be said to run smoothly. Because student boredom is one of the factors that become an obstacle in this online learning. The English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang said that in the application of online learning, the obstacles faced were very diverse. Technology is a major factor mentioned by the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang. This is indeed a problem that must be faced by schools, teachers, and of course students. Because not all students have supporting technology such as laptops and cellphones. Moreover, one way to access applications or devices designed by schools for teaching and learning is to use supporting technology such as laptops and cellphones. Apart from technology, the quality of the networks that teachers and students have is another obstacle in this online learning process. This is indeed one of the other problems of the technological constraints that students have. The government through (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2020) has actually been working on this. Through a quota assistance program for teachers, students, university students, and lecturers in undergoing distance learning during the pandemic. The Minister of Education and Culture said that the limited availability of internet data packages for educators and students has so far been one of the obstacles faced during distance learning. The Minister of Education and Culture and other stakeholders provide internet quota subsidies for students, teachers, students, and lecturers for four months' worth IDR 7.2 trillion. However, in this case the problem is the quality of the network that must be felt by students. Often students complain that the connection is lost in the middle of learning or in other cases, it is more difficult for students in remote areas to get a signal so that it is difficult to follow this online learning.

In addition, other factors caused by online learning are student motivation in learning and the atmosphere of students. This is related to Sharma et al. (2019) the primary school level, indicators of disengagement include: not paying attention, not completing school assignments, disruptive behaviour, withdrawal, low achievement, truancy and refusing to go to school, and this is a problem in community life because it is related to failure in elementary school. In online learning, the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang was admitted to be ineffective because of the ineffective delivery of material that was not optimal and students felt bored with the monotonous learning method so that many students in the middle of learning turned off the camera or left the classroom. In anticipation of this, the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang is very open to accommodating suggestions from students to convey what are the reasons students are less interested in learning as usual. The solution that was finally issued by the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang was to change the learning method. The substitute method used by the teacher usually is to assign assignments according to student habits such as making video storytelling and then uploading it on their social media or making posters as creative as they are and then analyzing it.

In this case too, the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang admitted to feeling the passivity of students in the online learning process. This happens when the teacher asks the students about the material that has been discussed but there is no response at all. This is closely related to student disengagement which was said by Chipchase et al. (2017) considering student disengagement is shown by traits such as being unaffected, detached, indifferent, alienated, upset, and hostile to describe students who are not involved in learning or can be said to be passive. Answering the problem of student passivity, the English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang has a solution where he does is that the teacher sometimes calls students by video call to see the student's condition so that he knows the reason why the student is not attending class or asks students about the obstacles he feels in teaching and learning process. Because it is closely related to the evaluation of student learning at the end of the semester. Apart from that, the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang also has other alternative solutions in responding to the challenges faced during distance learning in the midst of this pandemic. The English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang takes a personal approach to students. This was chosen by the teacher in order to know closely and understand what obstacles the students actually had when learning took place. The teacher tries to listen to what students feel and analyses the students' reasons to find out the personal constraints felt by students. So that in terms of answering these challenges, teachers have many effective ways to provide online teaching with alternative solutions that have been prepared.

## Conclusion

Based on the research results obtained, the authors conclude that there are many obstacles in online distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic which has occurred in the past year. From this pandemic, it resulted in student engagement during distance learning which created a separate perception for teachers, especially the English teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang to create effective learning methods. Various obstacles or challenges faced in distance learning such as

technology, networks, learning motivation, and also student atmosphere regarding student activity and student disengagement are trying to be answered by teachers of SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang by changing learning methods according to student habits.  The teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang admitted that online learning was not effective because a lot of material was not conveyed and teachers also had to follow the curriculum set by the government during the pandemic. In addition, the English teacher at SMA Negeri 1 Lumajang also provides a solution for learning that seems monotonous, namely by accommodating suggestions from students because this is related to student management. Another solution given by the teacher in dealing with student passivity is to take a personal approach to find out what obstacles are felt by students personally so that the teacher has the right teaching method that has been adapted to the student's condition.

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