Portraying Indonesian English language teachers' readiness for teaching online classes

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ABSTRACT

Amidst the proliferation of the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia, educators, students, and educational institutions are still adapting to the implementation of online instructional methods. This investigation delves into the preparedness of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in conducting online classes, as well as the obstacles they encounter while doing so. The purpose of this study is to serve as a foundation for schools to develop effective strategies for administering online classes and to equip teachers with the necessary skills to facilitate learning in the online realm. This current research employed a mixed-method design to gather the essential information required to address the research questions at hand. The data was collected through an online Likert-scale questionnaire and focus group interviews. The questionnaire was utilized to evaluate teachers' preparedness across three dimensions: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), teachers' presence, and institutional support. A total of 336 EFL teachers from various high schools in Indonesia voluntarily participated in the survey,

institutions. Furthermore, this exploration provides a concise overview of the intricate nature of teachers' preparedness.

Keywords: *Teaching readiness; Online teaching; Online class; TPACK*

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused severe health crises around the world, as well as affected all life aspects, including the education field. As all the teaching and learning activities have to be shifted to online mode, everyone involved in education has to adjust to the abrupt new demands of keeping education running. Teachers, students, parents, and education institutions are all required to adapt online teaching and learning. In the Indonesian context, the adventitious study-from-home policy enacted in March 2020 has forced all education institutions to switch to online teaching and learning with no or little preparation in terms of internet connectivity, teacher ability, and student-parent readiness (Fachriansyah, 2020). Because of this, teachers, in particular, are called for readiness to teach online classes (Lapada et al., 2020).

Online learning is defined as a learning conducted at a distance through electronic devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones and requiring internet connections (Gonzalez & Louis, 2018). Being identical to distance learning (Churiyah & Sakdiyyah, 2020), online learning is not a new concept (Howard et al., 2020; Subekti, 2020). However, in the context of Indonesia, online learning has been used "in a very limited number of schools and it was used minimally as a platform to provide extra exercises and to administer classroom management such as filing students' grades" (Lie et al., 2020, p.805) only. The majority of teaching and learning activities in Indonesian schools have been conducted in full face-to-face classroom settings. In line with this, special training and preparations for teaching in online mode are lacking or even absent. As a consequence, the majority of teachers in Indonesia are not really familiar with teaching in online mode. This same fact also applies to school EFL teachers.

Apart from the fact that school EFL teachers have little or no experience in teaching online classes, they are demanded to reformulate their teaching programs in order to support their students' learning in fully online class settings. Only with well-prepared

shifting their teaching from face-to-face to fully online in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gonzalez and Louis (2018) reported that there is a great deal of both qualitative and quantitative research investigating the effectiveness of online learning. However, research on online EFL learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is rarely found, especially in Indonesian secondary and high school settings (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Seeing this gap in literature, this study is conducted to mainly see how ready Indonesian school EFL teachers are for teaching online classes by addressing two research questions: (1) How ready are Indonesian EFL teachers for teaching online classes? and (2) What challenges are faced by Indonesian EFL teachers while teaching online classes?

2. Literature review

2.1. Online learning

Online learning has become an increasingly popular mode of education, offering flexibility and accessibility to learners of all ages and backgrounds. This term has been defined in a number of ways (see Anderson, 2008; Bakia et al., 2012). Online learning refers to an educational method that relies primarily on the use of the internet as the main way of communication (Bakia et al., 2012). Meanwhile, according to Anderson (2008), online learning is a specific type of distance education that focuses on offering educational opportunities that are more flexible in terms of time and location compared to traditional campus-based education.

Apparent advantages of implementing this mode of learning are that online learning provides learners with flexibility and convenience, allowing them to study in their own places, at their own pace and schedule (Allen & Seaman, 2016). Moreover, online learning enables students to have personalized learning experiences thanks to advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning (Wang, et al., 2021). These advanced technologies also provide learners access to various learning materials, digital resources, and other sources of information (Li & Wu, 2022), which could enhance their understanding and engagement with the subject matter.

In the Indonesian education context, online learning is not an entirely novel

2021; Rasmitadila, et al., 2020). Unequal access to devices, such as laptops or smartphones, further exacerbated the disparities in online learning participation, which caused a digital divide (Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020). Besides, the sudden shift to emergency online learning posed challenges for teachers in adapting to new pedagogical approaches and technologies. Most teachers were not given any training prior to the implementation of online learning; consequently, they showed lack of technical skills and appropriate pedagogical strategies during teaching in the online mode (Lestiyanawati & Widyantoro, 2020; Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Besides, challenges in student engagement, motivation, and social interaction were also evident in online classes (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Recent research by Saputra et al. (2022) even reported that the biggest challenge in online learning is related to assessing students. All of the aforementioned challenges have surely affected the learning outcomes of online learning.

2.2. A sense of readiness for teaching

A sense of readiness or preparedness for teaching has been a prominent research interest in the area of pre-service and in-service teachers' professional development for over two decades. Prior research has strongly suggested that this aspect should be considered into account to ensure the attainment of quality teachers as it may have a significant influence on other factors of quality teaching, such as a sense of self-efficacy in teaching (see Kim et al., 2018; Turgut & Sahin, 2016), commitment for teaching (see Hedge et al., 2018) as well as the effectiveness of teacher education (see Stites et al., 2018).

Considerable number of studies on perceived readiness for teaching highlight that this factor is context and task specific. Siwatu (2011), for example, reported that there was a significant correlation between a sense of preparedness and school sites. In more detail, the research results indicated that pre-service teachers who did their teaching practicum in a suburban area felt more prepared and confident than those in an urban area. This study emphasises the relationship between a geographical context and perceived readiness. Regarding specified tasks, an exploration completed in Australia revealed that early career teachers felt less prepared to teach diverse students in terms of cultural, linguistic, socio-economic aspects as well as indigenous students and students with a