

Identifying Obstacles and Solutions: Vocational EFL Teachers' Perception on Emergency Remote Teaching

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Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020, all schools have been closed as the effort to stop the spread of the virus. The learning process was carried out from home by utilizing various kinds of platforms. This research aims to identify the vocational EFL teachers' perception of dominant obstacles and solutions to overcome the obstacles they faced in Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used since both quantitative and qualitative data were needed. Fifty vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan participated in this research. The Data were collected from an online questionnaire. The results were shown at the top five rankings. They were measured based on the highest mean score and followed by online interviews from selected five participants. Data from online interviews were interpreted thematically, five themes emerged from online interview data. Some of them faced the same obstacles while some were different. Although vocational EFL teachers' faced the same obstacles, they overcame the obstacles in different ways. By knowing the obstacles and solutions to overcome the obstacles they faced in ERT they are always ready to face such situation like applying the ERT.

Keywords: Emergency Remote Teaching, Obstacles, Perception, Vocational EFL Teachers.

Since March 2020 Covid-19 has become a pandemic in Indonesia. Several policies related to handling this deadly outbreak have been implemented by the Government of Indonesia. The COVID-19 pandemic has serious impacts on teachers, students, and educational organizations. The Minister of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2020) has asked all schools to provide instructional flexibility in implementing learning and teaching activities. On-line learning is the only choice. The learning process is conducted from home by utilizing various kinds of platforms such as e-learning, Google classroom, Zoom, WhatsApp, and other suitable applications.

The method of delivering instruction did not have any impact on the curriculum and teaching content but when the selection of strategies in teaching is taken, it is necessary to redesign the pedagogy used by teachers (Code et al., 2020). Therefore, the Minister of Education and Culture Kemdikbud (2020) published an emergency curriculum during the Corona Pandemic period. The emergency curriculum is an adaptation of the national curriculum, where it concerns the Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum in Educational Units in Special Conditions.

In this research, the researcher used "Emergency Remote Teaching" (ERT) terminology to illustrate the education that took place during school closure, rather than online learning since well-planned online learning is substantially different from ERT that are delivered online in response to a crisis or disaster. Online learning is interaction with content and/ or people via the Internet for the purpose of learning, to find out information, or learn to do something (Means et al., 2014), while ERT is a temporary change from instruction delivery to alternative delivery due to crisis circumstances (Hodges et al., 2020). In this context, the crisis circumstance is the COVID-19 Pandemic outbreak. ERT supports study from home when the school closed by using Information and Communication

Technology (ICT). The use of technology is not just scientific knowledge to the practical aims of human life, but technology is a need. In emergency remote teaching, teachers must use technology to support our educational purposes.

Learning language especially English when a study from home using online has many challenges. The previous research found the biggest challenge for online language teaching is not only technology or its subject matter but in motivating learners to participate in lessons (Krish, 2008). The impact of changes in the teaching and learning process brought about by ERT has affected teacher performance and the quality of education in Indonesia (Rusmiati et al., 2020), including in Balikpapan City. Based on the result of the previous research, mostly only discussed the challenges and opportunities that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic often focus on student's perception, even if there was research that examined obstacles, the research was only conducted in higher education. Moreover, there was rarely in previous research examine the obstacles of ERT in vocational EFL teachers, and how did vocational EFL teachers overcome the obstacles they faced in ERT. By knowing the obstacles, and solutions to overcome the obstacles the vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT can be useful in the future. In line with Sujarwo et al, (2020) stated that The existence of several obstacles in the implementation of ERT is expected to be an evaluation in the future so the vocational EFL teachers are always ready when faced with a situation like this. Considering the present situation and previous researches, the researcher intends to fill the research gap with the present research, the researcher identifies the following questions:

1. What dominant obstacles do Vocational EFL teachers perceive about ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Balikpapan?
2. How do Vocational EFL teachers overcome the obstacles in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Balikpapan?

Literature Review

Concept of Emergency Remote Teaching

For this research, the term emergency remote teaching is as defined as “a sudden interim shift of instructional delivery to an online delivery mode as a result of a huge disaster or crisis, in contrary to the online courses which are initially planned and designed to be delivered virtually” (Mohammed et al., 2020). The Remote Teaching Theoretical concepts with four stages: inquiry, classification, design, and evaluation (Whittle et al., 2020). The remote teaching evaluation concept was developed by Hodges et al, (2020) known as CIPP (context, inputs, process, and products) model. Both theoretical concepts provide a useful instrument for analyzing emergency remote teaching. However, based on the concept, the researcher tried to investigate the advantages, obstacles, and solutions to overcome the obstacles the vocational EFL teachers faced. ERT is a temporary teaching solution to an emergent problem. Availability of resources looks at instructional and instrumental resources provided for schools to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The difference between terms ERT and online learning is only in the time of use while the term ERT is used in times of crisis, disaster, epidemic, or even war, which forces learning to be carried out online and going back to that model once a crisis or emergency is over (Hodges et al., 2020).

Online language teaching and learning

In terms of EFL context at school, communication with free online resources includes reading and writing taking place in an authentic environment with a real person. Therefore, it has been proven that ERT creates a genuine platform and learning space for EFL learners. This is important because some learners may have limited opportunities to develop their language proficiency in an authentic environment (Krishan et al., 2020). The aspects of language learning include improving motivation to learn English, respect towards others and their cultures, gaining more knowledge of their partners and their cultures, getting more vocabulary, being more confident and less worried while communicating online with others (Al-Sofi, 2016). Actually, online language teaching had been discussed a long time ago before the COVID-19 pandemic situation by previous researchers. There were obstacles to pedagogical and professional problems that arise in a rapidly changing environment (White, 2007). The biggest challenge for online language teaching is not technology or its subject matter but in motivating learners to participate in lessons (Krish, 2008).

Definition of Perception

Perception is the experience of an event or object and the relationship obtained by continuing information and interpreting messages. It gives meaning to stimulus-response in continuing information and predicting messages by involving attention, expectation, motivation, and memory. According to Michotte (2017) expand perception is a phase of the total process of action that allows us to adapt our activities to the world we live in. Perception is thinking about what has been done, and that can be done with behavior. Teachers' Perceptions form a significant component to describe the process of the learning environment (Lee & Tsai, 2005). The Teachers' Perception can be described as the developed opinion after having a certain experience that needs adjustment. Therefore, in this research, the Teachers' Perception is focused on the obstacles of ERT During the COVID-19 Pandemic, and what factors are necessary to bring the Teachers' Perception of ERT in Teaching EFL to be more contextual with the needs of this research.

Definition of Obstacles

Obstacles are something that blocks us so that movement, going forward or action which is prevented or made more difficult. According to Higgins (2006) obstacles can be conceptualized as interfering forces and impede the standard course of action and have to be removed or otherwise dealt with if one wishes to reach the desired end-state. Teachers faced many obstacles in ERT, distance learning for many teachers will not appear to be as effective as face-to-face learning. In teaching at home environment settings, teachers faced many problems (Joshi et al., 2020). The lack of previous experiences in virtual education, the lack of preparation, and the possible lack of expertise from the teachers (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). The basic facility for effective teaching and assessment requires a whiteboard and marker. The sudden movement of instruction during the semester from face to face in the classroom to the online classroom included other related challenges (Sahin & Shelley, 2020). One of the problems with the device is an internet connection. Every place has a different strength of internet connection. It can be from the facilities in the school. On the other hand, it can be from their connection to their device (Windiarti et al., 2019).

Another obstacle faced by teachers was not being ready for ERT. Many teachers still do not understand using technology, so the ERT process is constrained. The EFL teachers should have aware of the technology because if they do not know about it, they will struggle with online applications and platforms. ERT needs more time than a face-to-face class to be well-prepared, the teachers must be trained and prepared with sufficient knowledge and skill to maximize their practices carrying out the ERT (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). The teacher should attain the pedagogic creativity to engage the learners and importantly to stimulate them in learning. Meanwhile, they should also focus on the technical skills for ERT (Mohammed et al., 2020). Motivation also becomes a big problem in the ERT environment. Digital learning depended greatly on the teacher's motivation. The process of learning was dependent on distractions that the teachers faced when researching at home. Thus, low-motivated teachers should have more effort to keep themselves motivated by recalling their goals in teaching the language. The teachers could also assist students with low motivation with meaningful and fun learning materials (Inderawati et al., 2019).

Method

This research employed a mixed methods approach since both quantitative and qualitative data is collected. Mixed methods research is an approach to an inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Both quantitative and qualitative data were important for addressing the research's objective. Therefore, the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was used in this research, it is a design in mixed methods that appeals to individuals with a strong quantitative background or from fields relatively new to qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2014). It involved a two-phase project in which the researcher collected quantitative data in the first phase, analyzed the results, and then used the results to plan (or build on to) the second, qualitative phase. To investigate teachers' perception of the obstacles did Vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT, the researcher used an online questionnaire to obtain quantitative data, and interview

guidelines were used to obtain qualitative data to investigate how did the teachers overcome the obstacles they faced in ERT. Mixed-methods are closely linked to the concept of triangulation, which refers to the generation of multiple perspectives on a single phenomenon by using a variety of data sources, theories, or research methods (DonYei, 2007). The quantitative and the qualitative databases were analyzed two types of analyses (statistical and thematic) separately in this approach. By using this design, the research finding would be more complete and valid because it provides different methods to examine a different facet of the research's topic and then the result of those two methods is concluded.

Participants

50 vocational EFL teachers participated in this research and they had filled out the online questionnaire approximately one month between mid-March to early April 2021. A purposive sampling technique was used in this research. The data collection proceeded in two distinct phases with rigorous quantitative sampling in the first phase and with purposeful sampling in the second, qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014). Selecting the participants who gave many strongly agree answers in part two of the questionnaire about the obstacles based on two considerations, firstly the strongly agreed answer means an absolute yes and secondly the more obstacles vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT, the more ways would be known the solutions to overcome the obstacles faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Ranked them manually into the top ten and selected them to engage in online interviews by contacting them individually using WhatsApp messages. Five of them agreed to be interviewed voluntarily and five others did not. There is no limit to the number of respondents to make a purposive sample, as long as the needed information can be obtained and generated (Bernard, 2012).

Instrument

This research used two different data collection methods: an online questionnaire and a structured online interview. The first instrument was a web-based questionnaire using Google form with a set of questions and detailed instructions to fill the questions. The online questionnaire was chosen because it allows the collection of different data, such as facts, behavior information, attitudes, opinions, and all necessary information to answer the research question (DonYei, 2007). The questionnaire was adopted from the research of (Mayfield-Johnson et al., 2014). This questionnaire was chosen because it is closely related to the research objectives. Respondents were provided a five-point Likert scale to rate their range of agreement or disagreement. The questionnaire was approved before being utilized in this research. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section was data from demographic characteristics, including age, gender, school, and length of teaching. The second section was about the obstacles did teachers perceive in ERT has 18 items. The questionnaire spread to the participants using a link to the WhatsApp group.

The second instrument was interview guidelines, the researcher used interview guidelines to interview the participants to obtain qualitative data of this research. A Structured interview was used in this research since all online interview participants were asked the same question and sequentially. This kind of interview was most appropriate for this research since the researcher had a general idea of the topic cover in each interview and question to ask, to allow the real voice and experience of the participants,

to clarify what they are saying, and to elaborate on their ideas (Creswell, 2014). The interview guidelines contain open-ended questions. The researcher interviewed the vocational EFL teachers based on the interview guidelines. Interview guidelines were developed to investigate teachers' perceptions of how they overcome the obstacles of ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher achieved face validity and content validity of the interview guidelines by asked the advisor and requesting their opinions on the suitability of the question to the research objectives.

Data Collection Procedure

After the researcher obtained permission from the chairman and supervisor of the MGMP English subjects at the Balikpapan Vocational EFL teacher, and the questionnaire has been approved by the advisors, the researcher gave the questionnaire link to the participant through the WhatsApp group. Waiting for the participants to fill out the questionnaire within three weeks after the questionnaire has been filled in by the participants and complete. Analyzing the questionnaire using SPSS to obtain quantitative data, followed by a structured interview to obtain qualitative data with an online interview. Choosing and inviting the participant who has many strongly agree answers of the obstacles they faced in ERT to be involved in follow-up interviews individually to investigate further by using an online video conference. The data was also collected by doing an Interview between the researcher and the participants. Each participant got three sections of questions during the interview, warm-up questions, main questions had a Lead-off questions and followed by Follow-up questions, and recommendations. All online interviews were recorded by using a zoom meeting video conference recording feature. The data were transcribed verbatim before they were analyzed.

Data Analysis Technique

The quantitative and the qualitative databases were analyzed separately in this research. To obtain quantitative data, the researcher used an online questionnaire, and follow-up structured interview in the second phase by using interview guidelines to obtain qualitative data.

Data from the online questionnaire

In this research, the data collection technique used an online questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale is used. Analyzed the data by using SPSS version 23 to measure validity and reliability, tests of frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviation. After the result of measurement, the researcher interpreted the result descriptively by ranking since no treatment use for data collection.

Data from the online interview

After collecting the data from the online questionnaire and follow-up an interview, the online interview data analyzed by using inductive thematic analysis, little or no predetermined theory, structure, or framework is used to analyze data, instead of the actual data itself is used to derive the structure of analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this approach, the themes are strongly linked to the data since they emerge from its thematic analytics to identify, evaluate, and make a theme expressed by the participants. Firstly, all interview records (verbatim transcripts) and checking the recorded data, classifying the data based on the interview to obtain the obstacles and solutions to overcome the obstacles, reducing the data and taking only the data which showed significant contribution to the variables

being studied, giving code and categorizing the data using ATLAS.ti (Version 8), deciding which themes make meaningful contributions to understanding what was going on within the data and also conducting verification of the data to check if their description was an accurate representation, and finally Interpreted the data thematically to answer the research questions.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented starting with the results of quantitative findings which were analyzed by tests of frequency. The quantitative findings are presented by ranking and interpreted the result descriptively and then building on the results to find more detail with qualitative findings which gathered through the online interview by using zoom meeting video conference. The qualitative findings are presented and interpreted the result thematically with the smaller sample size after the result of quantitative findings. The findings are presented to answer the research questions. The following is the demographic data of respondents.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

A total of 50 vocational EFL teachers had participated in this research, consisting of 16 (32%) are male teachers, and 34 (68%) are female. Based on the age of the participants, the youngest was 27 years old, and the oldest was 61 years old. Based on the teaching experience, the participants have a variety of teaching experiences. The shortest teaching period was 2

years of teaching, and the longest teaching experience was 32 years of teaching.

The Quantitative Findings

The quantitative result was analyzed by a simple descriptive statistical survey design since no treatment was used for data collection. The data were gathered through the responses given by the participants to an online questionnaire on the frequency and percentages of the obstacles of ERT amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. The results of this research indicated the field research in terms of the research sample responses to the items of the questionnaire. The results of the field research are interpreted, according to the research questions, then the researcher presents the results on the frequency distribution in the form of tables.

Responses to the second part

The second part of the questionnaire was concerned with identifying the Vocational EFL Teachers' perception of the Obstacles of ERT amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below are the responses of the teachers to each item of this part. The number of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire was (N=50) teachers. The teachers' response has a different opinion for the items of this part. However, the total mean score for this part is (67.12), which mean that average of the vocational EFL teacher agree perceived that there were still many obstacles faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the mean score of each item shows by diagram and description below:

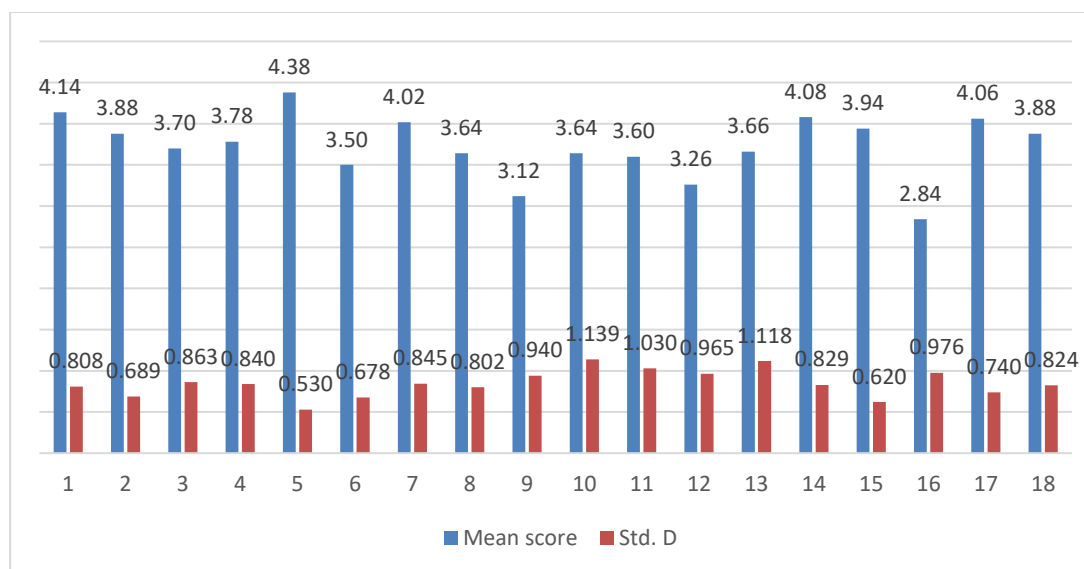


Diagram of mean score and standard deviation of the Obstacles of ERT

All of the vocational EFL teachers perceived the obstacles of ERT but the top five rankings were measured based on the highest mean score in part two of the questionnaire items. In the first position based on the vocational EFL teachers' responses is that students have a tendency to postpone completing work (ex., Doing assignments) in an online course with a mean score (4.38). This means that the vocational EFL teachers highly agree on this item, followed by that it may be more difficult to solve problems that arise in the online class in the second position with a mean score (4.14). In the third position is that the technology used for online classes does not always work as well or as easily as teachers expected with a mean score (4.08), and then there is a lack of feedback from the student in online classes in the fourth position with a mean score (4.06). In the fifth position is more

confused in an online class than in a classroom because of the lack of face-to-face interaction with a mean score (4.02).

The Qualitative Findings

The qualitative result was gathered through the online interview by using Zoom meeting. The researcher selected the participants who provided many strongly agree answers based on their answers in part two of the questionnaire about the obstacles they faced in ERT to find how the vocational EFL teachers overcome the obstacles, ranking them manually into the top ten and selecting them to engage in online interviews by contacting one by one and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. Five of them agreed to be interviewed voluntarily and five others did not, they were labeled as T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5. The result of

how the vocational EFL teachers overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic were analyzed with themes that emerged from the data below:

The mastery of digital platforms

In ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital platform was very popular since a learning process from home was implemented, such as Youtube, Zoom meeting, WhatsApp messages, and other applications. The digital platform is not just a practical application that is easy to use, but it is a need. Without them it is impossible for ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic can't be carried out properly, therefore the vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city are required to be able to use various platforms to help them in the ERT process.

"I use video from Youtube, that explain the material that I taught and I asked the student to work with video(T1)"

The use of video on Youtube made some vocational EFL teachers easier because they can explain many things about their material with video. Therefore, Youtube videos can be opened anytime anywhere that makes it easier so if students didn't come to the virtual class in the morning, they can see the video in the afternoon or at night and all subject is prepared on Youtube.

"In WhatsApp video call I can contact them personally so I can give them speaking directly with an unpredictable topic so they can answer spontaneously"

"I usually record some material and delivered to them, I gave them a question and try to ask about the meaning of the word they listen to"(T3)

Besides being easy to use, the WhatsApp application provides many important features in ERT, especially in teaching speaking and listening. The vocational EFL teachers can use WhatsApp video call to give the assignment in speaking by contact their students personally and make them speak with an unpredictable topic so the answer spontaneously. For Listening material, they recorded some listening materials and delivered them through WhatsApp voice to their students by giving questions and asking the meaning of the word they listen to.

It is very important for vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city to have a skill in digital platform so the students can have the learning subject optimally. They have to prepare the material interesting and learn how to use and operate various applications and platforms needed for ERT, by following training conducted by the school, asking their friends, or learn it by themselves.

Teachers' pedagogy

There is not only innovation related to technological aspects in ERT but also the emergence of new pedagogical aspects. ERT implies revising the approaches used in face-to-face learning. The change in the learning process from face-to-face to ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic forces vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city ready to adapt their learning methods. To overcome their confusion in ERT, they must improve their competence as teachers by changing their technic or methodology of teaching.

"I have to improve my pedagogical competence to adapt the study from home"(T2)

In order to plan an adequate pedagogical course for remote teaching, it is necessary to increase technological skills.

Vocational EFL teachers must change their teaching methods from conventional teaching to digital teaching methods.

"My effort is trying some technic and methodology to make them mastery English"(T4)

"I can solve the problem by changing the technic of my teaching"(T5)

By changing their teaching method was expected that ERT would be the same as face-to-face learning so that the students keep engaged and stimulating their proactive behavior. On one occasion, one of the vocational EFL teachers did not directly provide material at the beginning of the lesson, but they provided a kind of warm-up first or playing games to relaxing their students.

"I have to know the students' background or students psychology first"(T5)

By knowing the background or psychological aspects the student was ready to start the lesson. To attract students' attention one of the vocational EFL teachers also tried to elaborate on the material that was taught, so that students can ask and answer questions from each other.

Time management

A very significant change in study time at the beginning of the pandemic made teachers confused. Teachers have to adjust the study time to their students by dividing their time, even during breaks until night. They should be more flexible and always make time for their students who have a tendency to postpone completing work or assignments.

"I have to be more flexible with the learning process because the time schedule we have is not enough"(T2).

ERT requires unlimited time due to many obstacles were faced by vocational EFL teachers so that the time available for virtual learning was often not enough. Sometimes the vocational EFL teachers rescheduled their class meetings or even extend the time to their students.

"I reschedule the class meeting for another time"(T1)

"I usually extend the time for assignment submission"(T2)

Time delays were provided to facilitate students who had problems participating in ERT because of problems they had to join a virtual class. Vocational EFL teachers extended their time to give more flexible time to their students who had obstacles to submitting their tasks. Moreover, some students had a tendency to postpone their tasks or assignments so vocational EFL teachers gave more time to them until the weekend. One of the vocational EFL teachers also tried to give students punishment who were late submitting the task or giving a reward for those who submit early.

Creativity

Creativity in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic is also a very significant obstacle due to limited time, some vocational EFL teachers overcame it by utilizing a variety of interesting applications to attract students' attention. One of vocational EFL teachers trying to maintain their creativity and their students' creativity in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in various ways by modifying their materials and assignments with the

help of many digital applications to keep their creativity and their student creativity alive.

"I overcome it, by trying to explore the application or platform into something that can be used according to our abilities and desires"(T2).

There are many programs or applications available on the internet or the App store on smartphones that are easy to download for free. One of them is google meet which is similar to zoom meeting where the teacher can speak in English directly to students face-to-face virtually so the vocational EFL teacher can assess the students speaking directly.

*"To increase their speaking ability with google meet"(T1)
"I also use some game application from the app store and also I will modify my material and assignment so it will push their creativity"(T3)*

The google meet application was used by one of the vocational EFL teachers for speaking material. Many of them also use game-themed programs or applications to embraced student creativity.

Motivation

Motivation also becomes a problem in the ERT environment. The process of learning was dependent on distractions that the teachers and students faced when researching at home. Thus, low-motivated students should have more effort to keep themselves motivated by recalling their goals in teaching.

*"I always do Icebreaking to motivate my students first and this the problem-solving for the psychological aspect"(T2)
"I overcome it by elaborating on the learning material so that students are actively provoked to do questions and answers between me and the students and among the students themselves"(T4)*

The problem that the vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT was not only the internet problem but also the psychological aspect. Before the vocational EFL teachers start to teach and in a virtual class one of them always did Icebreaking to motivate my students first until the students were ready to start the lessons.

"I really need to motivate students because they want to keep on paying attention from the teacher"(T5).

The teachers could also assist students with low motivation with meaningful and fun learning material, or even gave the students punishment or rewards who have a tendency to postpone completing work or assignments.

"I change my method with giving a reward for those who submit early"(T3)

Almost of students postpone their tasks or assignments. At the first time, one of the vocational EFL teachers tried to give punishment who were late submitting the task, but if it didn't really work the vocational EFL teachers changed their technic by giving a reward for those who submit early. She gave the students like ten-point surplus and motivated others to submit early and most of the time was worked. Actually, she gave only a few assignments, it was just three or five assignments, it should

make them think why they didn't postpone it because it was just a few assignments or tasks.

The findings show that the vocational EFL teachers still have many obstacles in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic based on their perception, even though it has been a year that ERT was implemented generally in Indonesia, and especially in Balikpapan city. However, the teachers who participated in the online interview gave their perception of how to overcome the obstacles they faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The online interview participants revealed how they overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT differently each individual depending on the problems they face. Some of them faced the same obstacles while some were different. All participants in the online interview felt the same problem with an internet connection, they assumed the internet connection in their area was unstable.

"Yes, especially an internet connection, when I want to conduct a video conference with Zoom, I look for a place that has a strong signal so that when the learning process runs smoothly(T2)"

Despite the vocational EFL teachers faced the same obstacles, they overcame them in different ways. Most of the problems faced by the vocational EFL teachers have been overcome, and they were work.

Discussion

The current research has identified the vocational EFL teachers' perception of the obstacles in ERT. Even though it has been a year that ERT was generally implemented in Indonesia, the vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city still have many obstacles in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The results also indicated the field research in terms of the research sample responses to the items of the questionnaire and were interpreted according to the research questions. All of the vocational EFL teachers perceived the obstacles of ERT but the top five rankings were measured based on the highest mean score. The students have a tendency to postpone completing work, tasks, or assignments in an online course in the first place. Followed by, that it may be more difficult to solve problems that arise in online classes, that the technology used for online classes does not always work as well or as easily as I expected, there is a lack of feedback from the student in the online classes, and it was more confusing in an online class than in a classroom because of the lack of face-to-face interaction.

The findings above are similar to Mayfield-Johnson et al, (2014) revealed the learners have a tendency to postpone completing work or tasks in online learning. The lack of previous experiences in virtual education, the lack of preparation, and the possible lack of expertise from the teachers (Sepulveda-Escobar & Morrison, 2020). In line with Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) found that many teachers still do not understand using technology, so the ERT process is constrained. The EFL teachers should have aware of the technology because if they do not know about it, they will be confused with online applications and platforms, there are not many options to conduct the study from home in a pandemic situation besides remote teaching (Hermansyah & Aridah, 2021). Slightly different from Windiarti et al, (2019) found that one of the problems with the device is an internet connection in Indonesia. It can be from the facilities in the school. On the other hand, it can be from their

connection to their device, and strengthened by Atmojo & Nugroho (2020) stated that reliable internet connection is the major challenge in ERT. In contrast to Singapore or developed countries, where the internet connection is no longer a big problem because they have sophisticated internet quality and large capacity. Even a free wifi connection for the public area like in developed countries. Indonesia is an archipelagic country where every place has a different internet connection strength and this may make the connection strength in our country weak in some areas compared to other countries.

The online interview result provides descriptive information on how the vocational EFL teachers overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic based on Vocational EFL teachers' perception in Balikpapan. The information of how the teachers overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT is taken from the online interview with the five teachers. The findings of how the vocational EFL teachers overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in Balikpapan were discussed by themes. There were five themes that emerged from online interview data, the mastery of digital platforms, teachers' pedagogy, time management, creativity, and motivation.

1. The mastery of digital platforms is very important for the vocational EFL teacher in Balikpapan city to have a skill in digital platform so they can have the learning subject optimally. They have to prepare the material interesting and learn how to use and operate various applications and platforms needed for ERT. The point is they must keep trying to learn about digital platforms so as not to be left behind about digital technology.
2. There is not only innovation related to technological aspects in ERT but also the emergence of new pedagogical aspects. The change in the learning process from face-to-face to ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic forces vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city ready to adapt their learning methods. To overcome their confusion in ERT, they must improve their competence as teachers by changing their technic or methodology of learning. The change of teaching method was expected that ERT would be the same as face-to-face learning so that the students keep engaged and stimulating their proactive behavior.
3. A very significant change in study time at the beginning of the pandemic made teachers confused. Teachers have to adjust the study time to their students by dividing their time, even during breaks until night. They should extend their time to give more flexible time to their students who had obstacles to submitting their tasks.
4. Creativity in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic is also a very significant obstacle due to limited time. Some vocational EFL teachers overcome it by utilizing a variety of interesting applications to attract students' attention. One of vocational EFL teachers trying to maintain their creativity and their students' creativity in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in various ways by modifying their materials and assignments with the help of many digital applications to keep their creativity and their student creativity alive.
5. The problem that the vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT was not only the internet problem but also the psychological aspect. Before the vocational EFL teachers start to teach and in a virtual class one of them always did Icebreaking to motivate my students first until the students were ready to

start the lessons. The teachers could also assist students with low motivation with meaningful and fun learning material, or even gave the students punishment or rewards who have a tendency to postpone completing work or assignments.

Although it has been a year that ERT was generally implemented in Indonesia, the vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city still have many obstacles in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the vocational EFL teachers overcame the obstacles they face in ERT differently each individual depending on the problems they face. Some of them faced the same obstacle while some were different. All participants in the online interview felt the same problem with an internet connection, they assumed the internet connection in their area was unstable. Despite they faced the same obstacles, they overcame them in different ways. Most of the problems faced by the vocational EFL teachers have been overcome, and they were work. By knowing the advantages, obstacles, and solutions to overcome the obstacles the vocational EFL teachers faced in ERT can be useful in the future. In line with Sujarwo et al, (2020) stated that The existence of several obstacles in the implementation of ERT is expected to be an evaluation in the future so that the vocational EFL teachers are always ready when faced with a situation like this.

Conclusion

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020, the speed of moving from face-to-face instruction to online instruction was carried out in Balikpapan city, Indonesia. The pandemic has exposed the difficulties of study from home, various kinds of learning media, and platforms utilized by the vocational EFL teachers to help them in the remote teaching process. Even though it has been a year that ERT was generally implemented in Indonesia. The vocational EFL teachers in Balikpapan city still have many obstacles in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The results also indicated the field research in terms of the research sample responses to the items of the questionnaire and were interpreted according to the research questions. All of the vocational EFL teachers perceived the obstacles of ERT but the top five rankings were measured based on the highest mean score. The students have a tendency to postpone completing work in an online course in the first place. It means that the vocational EFL teachers highly agree on it. Followed by the more difficult to solve problems that arise, the technology used for online classes does not always work as well or as easily as teachers expected, the lack of feedback from the student, and more confused in an online class than in a classroom because of the lack of face-to-face interaction. Other research also found that the learners have a tendency to postpone completing work or tasks in online learning. The lack of previous experiences and preparation from the teachers made the teachers still do not understand using technology, so the ERT process is constrained, there are not many options to conduct the study from home in a pandemic situation besides remote teaching. Different from other research that found the problem of ERT in Indonesia is an internet connection so reliable internet connection is the major challenge in ERT because Indonesia is an archipelagic country, where every place has a different internet connection strength, and this may make the connection strength in our country is weak compared to other countries where the internet connection is no longer a big problem because they have sophisticated internet quality and large capacity.

The interview result has explored how the teachers overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. 15 questions in the questionnaire and two questions related to teaching EFL were collected and were given differently to each participant according to their strongly agreed answers to the questionnaire. There were five themes that emerged from online interview data about how the vocational EFL teachers overcame the obstacles, such as the mastery of digital platforms, teachers' pedagogy, time management, creativity, and motivation. Some of them faced the same obstacle while some were different. Internet connection is the most faced obstacle the online interview participants faced in ERT in Balikpapan, they felt the internet connection in their area was unstable. They overcame the obstacles they faced in ERT in different ways, even though they faced the same obstacles. Most of them have been overcome, and it was worked. By knowing the obstacles, and how the vocational EFL teachers overcome the obstacles of ERT can be useful in the future so that it is always ready when faced with a situation like ERT or other crisis circumstances. Vocational EFL teachers should change their method of teaching by learning about digital technology to develop learning activity in ERT conditions. Vocational EFL teachers should have flexible time in the learning process for their students in ERT. Vocational EFL teachers should have creativity in their learning process so their students motivate in a virtual class. The government must provide a solution to overcome the bad internet connection in some areas in Indonesia. Because this research was conducted only with the vocational EFL teachers from one city in Indonesia, the findings should not be generalized. The Suggestions for Further Research to extend their participants and place more so that they can explore more about ERT.

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