

## The Challenges of Online Learning in Teaching Speaking Skill during the Covid-19

**Lia Apriani<sup>a</sup>**

<sup>a</sup> English Students, Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram

**Muh. Junaidi<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>b</sup> English Lecturer, Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram, [muhjunaidi13@gmail.com](mailto:muhjunaidi13@gmail.com)

**Lume<sup>c</sup>**

<sup>c</sup> English Lecturer, Universitas Nahdlatul Wathan Mataram, [lumempd620@gmail.com](mailto:lumempd620@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the difficulties encountered in online teaching of speaking skills during the COVID-19 Pandemic at Mts NW Sepit. The researcher applied a descriptive qualitative method in this research. As most qualitative data is collected through interactions with participants through the use of interviews, surveys, questioners, or focus groups, a researcher must find participants who are willing to speak about their experiences. Thus, the participants chosen in this research are the students of MTs NW Sepit in the 9th grade, which consists of 18 males and 10 females, and two English teachers of MTs NW Sepit. The result of this study indicated that poor internet access experienced by the students of Mts NW Sepit is a major problem. Students are often slow to respond to the learning activities carried out online. Especially in speaking skills, students will never be able to communicate using English effectively, and they do not understand how to make sentences in English very well. In addition, teachers also cannot directly measure students' ability. So that students don't have trouble getting on the internet, the school gives teachers and students internet data packages.

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Online Teaching, Speaking, Covid-19.*

### INTRODUCTION

Speaking occurs in various conditions. However, it is reasonable to state that the most noticeable of speaking and communicating behavior in the classroom, particularly during learning activities (Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). It refers to the teacher who explains the material being taught, which is

certainly through speaking to the students. Especially in the context of EFL countries, where English teachers are required to speak often as it needs to be clearly explained (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019). Also, it is part of the teacher's obligation since English is not their mother tongue.

Somehow, because they are not acquiring English as their mother tongue, it is really challenging for the EFL teacher to convey the message to the students. Various challenges have been faced, regarding making the language understandable, guiding to meet the basic concept of the material, raising students' interest, sustaining the class climate, and any other challenges that probably need to be more investigated (Ahmed, 2018; Aleksandrak, 2011; Musliadi, 2016; Nuraini, 2016; Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019; and Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). It shows that teaching in a different language from the mother tongue seems to be full of encounters.

Relating to the narration above, it drives us to the clause about challenge in teaching speaking in EFL countries. Teaching speaking in common ways, face to face, even really challenges for the teacher because teacher needs to fully guided the students to speak in good ways; emphasizing the accuracy, pronunciation, content, etc. (Paneerselvam & Mohamad, 2019 and Yusuf & Zuraini, 2016). Right now, imagine how challenging to teach speaking to the student in online.

At the beginning of 2020, global society faces the COVID-19 Pandemic, which forces everyone to adopt various new habits.

This pandemic has a deep impact on all people's lives, such as in the sectors of the economy, health, education, and so on. The impact which is mostly felt by the citizens, especially in Indonesia, is education. It is because there is so much chaos happening in this field, which is from the students or the teacher. This pandemic makes everyone worried about interacting face-to-face with others, as the viruses can spread at anytime from person to person. This condition requires people to stay and work from home.

In accordance with the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education No. 4 of 2020 concerning the implementation of education policy in the emergency period of the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), it is recommended to carry out the learning process from home through online learning. Readiness from service providers and students is the demand for the implementation of online learning.

The implementation of this online learning requires supporting devices such as computers or laptops, mobile phones, and other tools as intermediaries that must be connected to an internet connection. With the implementation of online home learning, teachers are required to be more innovative in putting together learning steps. This change in

the way of teaching certainly makes teachers and students adapt from face-to-face learning in the classroom to online learning.

Based on the description above online learning during this pandemic is not easy, there needs to be good cooperation from various educational subjects. Thus, by this research, the researcher wants to explore the challenges of online teaching in speaking skill during the Covid-19 Pandemic at MTs NW Sepit in academic years 2020/2021.

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

### Learning Effects

According to Popham (2003:7), the effectiveness of the learning process should be reviewed from the relationships of certain teachers who teach certain groups of students in certain situations in an effort to achieve certain instructive goals. The effectiveness of the learning process means the success rate of teachers in teaching certain groups of students by using certain methods to achieve certain instructive goals. Dunne (1996:12) argues that the effectiveness of learning has two characteristics. The first characteristic is to make it easier for students to learn something useful, such as facts, skills, grades, concepts, or other desired learning outcomes. Second, that skill is recognized by those who are

competent to judge, such as teachers, supervisors, tutors, or students themselves.

### Learning Media

Learning media is a tool that is used by teachers so that learning activities take place effectively. E-learning and the school environment are media of learning as a means of delivering a message. It has to do with the direct learning model, that is, with the way the teacher acts as a messenger of information. Ideally, teachers use a variety of appropriate media. Media learning is a teaching and learning tool. Everything can be used to stimulate the mind, feelings, attention, abilities, or skills of learners so as to encourage the occurrence of the learning process.

In general, learning media has the following uses (Yusufhadi Miarso, 2004):

- 1) The media is able to provide varied stimuli to the brain so that it can function optimally.
- 2) The media can overcome the limitations of the experience that students have. Family and community life are very decisive. The availability of books and other reading, travel opportunities, and so on are factors that determine the richness of the child's experience. If in a teaching

material, students are unlikely to be taken to the object studied, then the object is brought to the student through the media.

- 3) Media can exceed classroom boundaries.
- 4) Media allows for direct interaction between students and their environment.
- 5) The media instigated the uniformity of the observations. Observations made can be jointly directed to the things intended by the teacher.
- 6) Generating new desires and interests.
- 7) The media generates motivation and stimulates learning.

### **E-Learning as a Learning Medium**

Student-centered learning methods are included in e-learning. The student is obliged to be autonomous and accountable for the learning process since he may learn anywhere, at any time, which is why having the tools available is crucial. Learners must be active participants in e-learning. Students can use e-learning to search for and retrieve information or learning resources depending on the syllabus or criteria established by teachers or education management. Students will have a plethora of knowledge since they will be able to access information relating to their learning

materials from anywhere. Students can also engage in online conversations with experts on their subjects via e-mail or chat.

According to Sudirman Siahaan (2004) in Edhy Sutanta (2009), there are at least three e-learning functions in classroom instruction:

#### **1) Supplements**

If students have the option of using electronic learning resources or not, it is considered to function as a supplement. There is no requirement for pupils to have the option of using electronic learning resources or not in this scenario. There is no requirement for learners to access the content in this scenario. Even though it's not required, students who use it will definitely learn or understand more.

#### **2) Complement**

When electronic learning resources are created to supplement the learning materials obtained by pupils in the classroom, they are said to serve as a complement. As a supplement, electronic learning tools are designed to supplement enrichment items.

#### **3) Substance**

It is said to be a substance when e-learning is done in lieu of learning activities, for example, by using models

of learning activities. There are three models to choose from: (1) completely face-to-face (conventional), (2) partly face-to-face and partly over the internet, or (3) entirely over the internet.

But using e-learning can't be separated from its flaws (Bullen, 2001; Beam, 1997, in Asep Herman Suyanto, 2005), such as the fact that teachers and students don't talk to each other or with each other. This lack of interaction can make it take longer for people to learn and teach values.

### **Comparison between Conventional Learning and E-learning**

The distinction between traditional and e-learning is that in traditional learning, instructors are seen as all-knowing individuals and are assigned to channel information to their students. The primary focus of e-learning is on students. Students are independent and accountable for their own learning at times. The e-learning environment will encourage students to take a more active part in their education. Students create and find content via their own efforts and initiatives. Reza Syaiful (2007) and Ade Suyitno (2012) say the following is the difference between e-learning and traditional ways of teaching:

### **Conventional Learning**

- 1) Teachers play a role in motivating and guiding learning.
- 2) Tests and exams are conducted according to a predetermined schedule in general.
- 3) Laboratories are available in conducting test activities and practical experiments.
- 4) Institutions have a fixed calendar and duration for each subject.
- 5) Learning activities are limited to those who attend the institution.

### **E-Learning**

- 1) Depending on self-motivation.
- 2) Tests and exams are conducted according to the speed of the student's capture.
- 3) Innovative methods are required to conduct tests and practice experiments.
- 4) The duration of the course is determined by the student.
- 5) More successful in the number of students who follow online learning.

### **The Challenges of E-learning**

The challenges in online learning are as follows:

- 1) Technological inequality and internet network difficulties between city and local schools (learning applications).
- 2) Limited resources for the utilization of educational technologies such as the internet and quotas.
- 3) The relationship between teachers, students and parents in online lessons has not been integral.

The above challenges should not be a burden for us. We must be able and courageous to step up to make online learning an opportunity to change and improve our education for the better.

### Speaking

According to Brown (1994:1) speaking is process to collect the data of information and in accepting, produce and processes the data to be valid information and ready to deliver as good communication. Speaking skill is positioned in the first rank of education sector (Thornbury, 2005:1). Chivers and Shoolbred (2007:25) state that for communication to be effective, the content needs to be clearly understood by other people, meaningful and interesting to the audience.

Bygate (1987) identified two elements for speaking skill, i.e. production skill and interaction skill. In production skill, speaking

ability take place without the time limit and in interaction skill, there is a negotiation between learners. Both skills can help the learners to improve students' speaking ability with easier. Speaking skill must be acquired by both lecturers and students. Speaking skill in this research is the learners' ability to speak, to make a dialogue, to practice in the real discussion for fluent English with a minimum of correct grammar and a range of useful vocabulary which help others to communicate with them.

### The Aspects of Speaking

There are some aspects that must be fulfilled by the learners in order to measure whether their speech is good or not. According to Brown (2001), the aspects of speaking are as follows:

#### 1) Fluency

It refers to one's ability to speak smoothly and easily. Fluency is the matter of the way someone speaks the language without any trouble like thinking the word confusing the idea, etc.

#### 2) Comprehension

Comprehension is a students' competence to comprehend all of speaker says to them. For oral communication, it certainly requires a

subject to respond, to speech as well as to initiate it.

### 3) Grammar

Grammar is the way to organize the words into the correct sentence. This is important that if the speaker can master grammar to organize the word, so the speaker also easily to speak English well.

### 4) Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the basic of language. It appears in every language skills. It is very important because we can say nothing without vocabulary in our mind. Vocabulary is about choice of word which is used appropriately based on the context of speaking.

### 5) Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the important component of language. Therefore, it is necessary if the students have a good pronunciation so their speaking will be understandable.

## Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking is needed by the students. According to Brown (2007) that the principles of teaching speaking are depend on the objective, focus on both fluency and accuracy, providing intrinsically motivating techniques, encouraging the use of authentic

language in meaningful context, providing appropriate feedback and correction, capitalizing on the natural link between speaking and listening, the students opportunities to initiate oral communication, and encouraging the development of speaking strategy. Teaching speaking is very important part in language learning. Teaching speaking for some teacher is not easy. As Brown (2000) states successful oral communication in the target language with other speakers serves as a display of successful language acquisition.

The statement brings forth the significance of developing speaking skill, indicating competent language learners. Teaching speaking is challenging even for language teachers, which requires more practice to improve (Zeynep Çetin Köroğlu, 2017). Thus, the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching speaking have been intriguing the researcher's interest.

To support this research, it is very important for the researcher to show some review of previous research. Here are some studies that have been applied and related to this research.

The first is a study conducted by Ali Sadikin and Afreni Hamidah (2020). In his research entitled "Online Learning in the Middle of the COVID-19 Pandemic," The

purpose of this study is to obtain an overview of the implementation of online learning in lessons in the Biology Education Program as a way to suppress the spread of COVID-19 in universities. The study used Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis. The results of this study show that: (1) students already have the basic facilities needed to follow online learning; (2) online learning has flexibility in its implementation and is able to encourage the emergence of learning independence and motivation to be more active in learning; (3) distance learning encourages the emergence of social distancing behavior and minimizes the emergence of student crowds so as to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 in the college environment.

The second is the research conducted by Hika Handarini Ochtafia (2020) entitled "Online Learning as an Effort to Study from Home (SFH) During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The purpose of this research is to identify online learning activities wherever students can access learning as an effort to support government programs, namely study from home during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as students' responses to online learning during school. This research uses the method of literature research, where this

research is in the collection of information and data using a variety of materials and materials in the library, namely in the form of books, journals, documents, magazines, historical stories, news and other historical sources that have relevance (Dewi, 2020:57). The result of this study is that students feel more comfortable asking questions and expressing opinions in forums conducted online (Firman and Ari, 2020). Kuo, et al. (2014) stated that online learning is more student-centered so as to bring about the responsibility and autonomy of students in learning. This made students more able to foster self-reliance in learning.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher applied a descriptive qualitative method in this research. As most qualitative data is collected through interactions with participants through the use of interviews, surveys, questioners, or focus groups, a researcher must find participants who are willing to speak about their experiences. Thus, the participants chosen in this research are the students of MTs NW Sepit in the 9th grade, which consists of 18 males and 10 females, and two English teachers of MTs NW Sepit.

This research was conducted at MTs NW Sepit, which is located at Jalan Lalu

Mustiadi No.32, Sepit, Keruak District, East Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara - 83554. There are two types of data in this research, i.e., primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by the researcher directly from the main sources through interviews, surveys, experiments, etc. Meanwhile, the secondary data used in this research was collected through other resources.

In collecting the data, the researcher used participant observation, followed by an interview. In analyzing the data, the researcher followed several stages. After collecting the data, the researcher continually circulates among these steps to comprehend all of the information needed in the next data analysis steps. The next step is data condensation. It is the process of choosing, simplifying, focusing, abstracting, and transforming the data. In this step, the researcher chose the aspects that were raised as questions on the questionnaire. It makes it easier for researchers to collect the data. The next step is the data display. This step prepared a collection of information organized. And the last step is to draw a conclusion and verify it.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Challenges of Online Teaching in Speaking Skill

Here are some challenges faced during an online teaching by the teachers:

#### Internet Access

Online teaching-learning needs good internet access in order for the process of online teaching-learning to run well. Meanwhile, several students in MTs NW Sepit had poor internet access. The students have not been covered well with the signal, and there are problems with the internet quotas, so they cannot access the internet, and even some students do not have smartphones.

Here are the teachers' responses to the interview:

**TR** : *Apa tantangan yang Anda hadapi saat mengajar daring dalam pelajaran speaking di MTs. NW Sepit?*

(What are the challenges that you face for teaching English online at MTs NW Sepit?)

**P1** : *Yang pertama yaitu, siswa kesulitan untuk mengakses internet, jadi siswa kesulitan untuk mendapatkan materi, memahami materi yang diberikan oleh guru, dan kesulitan mengirim tugas ke guru.*

(The first is that students are difficult to access the internet, so the students

are difficult to get materials, understand materials given by the teacher, and send the assignment to the teacher.)

**TR** : Apakah semua siswa kesulitan untuk mengakses internet?

*(Is it difficult for all your students to access the internet?)*

**P1** : Tidak, hanya beberapa siswa saja.

*(No, it is just several students.)*

### Media

People are connected with each other through an internet connection that needs a medium, i.e., a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Meanwhile, several students in MTs NW Sepit do not have any smartphones.

**TR** : *Tantangan apa saja dalam mengajar daring Bahasa Inggris di MTs. NW Sepit?*

*(What are the difficulties in teaching online at MTs. NW Sepit?)*

**P2** : *Beberapa siswa tidak memiliki telepon pintar, sedangkan siswa yang memiliki telepon pintar terkendala dengan sinyal dan paket data.*

*(Several students don't have a smartphone, while the students that do have difficulty accessing the signal and the internet data packages).*

**TR** : *Lalu bagaimana dengan masalah speaking yang anda hadapi saat belajar daring?*

*(So, how about the problem of speaking you face when learning online classes?)*

**P2** : *Kesulitannya hanya dalam mengartikan saja, banyak siswa yang tidak bisa mengartikan karena jarang buka kamus dan kurangnya pengetahuan kosa kata, sedangkan masalah ejaan dan pelafalan mereka cukup lihai dalam mendengarkan ketika saya mengajar.*

*(The difficulty is only in interpreting and translating; many students who cannot interpret because they rarely open the dictionary and lack vocabulary, while their spelling and pronunciation problems are quite good at listening when I teach.)*

### Managing Online Class

Managing a class can affect the teaching-learning process. Both teachers and students, in a good situation, easily succeed in the teaching and learning process.

**TR** : *Adakah tantangan lain yang anda hadapi dalam mengajar daring pelajaran speaking?*

*(Are there any difficulties you encounter when teaching English online?)*

**P1** : *Mengajar daring tidaklah seperti kelas biasanya. Bahwa saya lebih memilih untuk mengajar di kelas biasa di sekolah, bertemu*

*langsung. Kelas daring tidaklah efektif karena guru kesulitan untuk menyampaikan materi khususnya mengajar speaking. Karena, dalam pelajaran speaking praktik adalah nomor satu dan paling penting, namun ketika belajar daring siswa kurang memperhatikan apa yang saya suruh sehingga terjadi miskomunikasi.*

(The online class is not the same as the offline class. It means that I prefer to teach in an offline class that is in a school or directly meets. An online class is not effective since the teacher finds it difficult to deliver the materials, especially in teaching speaking. Because, in teaching, speaking practice is number one and the most important. However, when online teaching, the students pay less attention to what I say, so what happened is miscommunication.

**TR :** *Oh. Lalu, apakah sulit untuk mengetahui kapabilitas siswa Anda untuk memahami materi?*

(Oh. So, is it hard to know the capability of your students to understand your materials?)

**P1 :** *Tentu saja, ya. Guru tidak begitu mengetahui pemahaman akan materi yang*

*sudah saya berikan karena responnya tidaklah secara langsung sebaik saat di ruang kelas. Siswa laki-laki cenderung kurang merespon materi tidak sebaik perempuan. Siswa laki-laki kurang merespon di WhatsApp, dan seringkali terlambat mengirim tugas. Siswa jarang bertanya pada saya dan memilih malas saat belajar daring tidaklah seperti di kelas biasa yang saya secara langsung dapat memantau.*

(Of course, yes. The teacher does not much know the students' understanding of the materials that I have given to them since the responses are not as good as those in the classroom. The male students have less response to my materials and are not as good as the females. The male students are less responsive on WhatsApp and are often late in sending the assignment. Students are rarely asked to come to me and are often lazy when learning online, as opposed to in a traditional class where I can directly supervise them.)

**TR :** *Bagaimana dengan jadwal belajar online dalam speaking?*

(How about an online teaching schedule for speaking skills?)

**P1** : *Seperti jadwal belajar offline mulai dari jam 07:00 pagi sampai selesai, akan tetapi siswa boleh bertanya kapan saja mereka mau untuk kejelasan materi pelajarannya.*  
(Like an offline learning schedule, starting from 07:00 to finish. But students may ask whenever they want to clarify the subject matter through WhatsApp.)

### **The Strategies of the Teachers to Face the Challenges of Online Teaching in Speaking Skill**

The English teachers in MTs NW Sepit also provide solutions to the problems that are faced in teaching online in speaking skills.

**TR** : *Apa solusi anda untuk tantangan yang anda hadapi?*  
(What's your solution to the challenges that you have to deal with?)

**P1** : *Solusi saya adalah memberi perpanjangan waktu kepada siswa untuk mengirim tugasnya. Selain itu, jika siswa tidak bisa menggunakan telepon genggamnya atau mengakses internet, siswa saya perbolehkan untuk mengirimnya ke rumah saya. Guru juga harus bisa mencari materi yang menarik agar siswa nyaman dan tidak bosan saat belajar materi dan mengerjakan*

*tugas.*

(My solutions are giving additional time to the students to send their assignments. Besides, if the students cannot use the hand-phone or access the internet, they are allowed to send their assignments to my house. The teacher also should be able to find interesting materials for the students to enjoy and not be bored while learning the materials and doing the assignment.)

**TR** : *Bagaimana Anda menghadapi tantangan mengajar daring dalam pelajaran speaking di MTs. NW Sepit?*

(How do you face the challenges of teaching online in English at MTs. NW Sepit?)

**P2** : *Sekolah menyediakan paket data internet untuk semua siswa. Dengan adanya paket data tersebut saya dan siswa dapat berkomunikasi melalui WhatsApp dan ZOOM meet.*

(The school provided internet data packages for all students. So, with the internet data packages, me and the students can communicate through WhatsApp and Zoom. Besides, if the students cannot use the handphone or access the internet, the students are

allowed to send their assignment into my house.)

Based on the data taken from the interview and observation, the challenges faced by both teachers are similar, namely that several students face limited internet access since the signal area is not well covered. The difference in data is that the P2 said that several students did not have a smartphone, while the P1 didn't. Besides, the P1 gave more detailed information, such as the teacher's preference for teaching an offline class. The teacher cannot deliver the materials directly and should not clarify the student's understanding of learning the materials or do the assignments. In addition, the students do not actively respond to the material given by the teacher, especially the male students, and tend to be lazy when learning online, especially in speaking skills. The students have difficulties in getting meaning or understanding the conversation.

### **The Teachers Problems Faced during Online Teaching**

Here are based on the presented finding covering the online teaching and learning English process especially in speaking skill. The problems faced by the teachers during an online teaching are as follows:

1. Difficulties in understanding the conversation;
2. Lack of unfamiliar words;
3. Lack of pronunciation;
4. Shyness;
5. Afraid in making mistakes.

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

Based on the result of the observation and interview, there are several problems faced by the students during online learning. First, most of the students are poor at grammar. They will never be able to communicate effectively using English, and they do not understand how to make sentences in English very well. Second, most students lack vocabulary. They cannot speak English because they have a limited vocabulary. The third, most of the students felt afraid, shy, and made mistakes. Students are afraid their friends will laugh if they make some mistakes while speaking English. They do not want to speak English with the correct intonation.

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