

Online English speaking instruction in junior high schools: Readiness and obstacles

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ABSTRACT

In the midst of a pandemic, teaching speaking online becomes one of the challenges. This study investigates whether or not English teachers were prepared to teach speaking virtually. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to determine the English teachers' readiness and obstacles to teaching speaking online during the pandemic Covid-19. The researchers utilized mixed research methods to conduct this study. The information was gathered via questionnaires and interviews. The experts have tested and validated these instruments. The data were then quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. Quantitative data were analyzed with the aid of SPSS statistical calculations. In contrast, qualitative data were analyzed using multiple steps, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. The results indicated that the majority of English teachers were prepared to implement online speaking instruction during a pandemic, despite the fact that some teachers were not quite prepared due to several obstacles. As for the challenges encountered by English teachers, there were online speaking assessments, poor connections, low interaction, and a lack of learning devices. Shortly, English teachers prepared to teach online speaking to students in order to improve the students' speaking ability, despite the emergence of certain obstacles.

Keywords: *Teaching speaking online; Teachers' readiness; Teaching obstacles*

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1. Introduction

Online learning is part of integrated technology in the educational environment that has not been separated over time (Sharpe & Benfield, 2005). Indonesian government determines information, communication, and technology (ICT) must be integrated into the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the government of Indonesia states that technology is a part of curriculum development for all education levels for the teaching and learning process in Indonesia. This regulation is written in the Act of National Education System No 20 the Year 2003, specifically in Chapter X, article 36 which states the Curriculum must be appropriate for the level of education in terms of science, technology, and the arts. It can be stated that the development of the Indonesian curriculum must take into account technological advancements for all levels of education and all topics, including English instruction. Where, during a pandemic, online learning in speaking and other skills needed to be implemented in the teaching and learning process because speaking is one of the important skills (Goh & Burns, 2012). This is based on the mandate of the ministry of education and culture circular number 4 of 2020 on the implementation of education in the emergency period of the covid-19 pandemic which is then strengthened by circular number 15 of 2020 on guidelines for the implementation of learning from home in the emergency of the spread of covid-19. In relation to this pandemic, the readiness of English teachers, especially in speaking skills is questioned because several teachers faced several obstacles during this implementation of online learning. Waryanto and Setyaningrum (2020) stated that learning readiness in online learning is one of the considerations for making teaching and learning successful.

In relation to this condition, the researchers also observed and interviewed several English teachers in Bengkulu City. The result of this interview showed that all schools have implemented online learning in teaching English, especially in speaking. However, they faced several problems, such as some teachers did not how to use online learning platforms. Some teachers had problems with the internet connection. Some schools were not facilitated with online learning systems. They were also difficult to increase the participation of the students in the online teaching and learning process because speaking needs participation or interaction in the online classroom.

Furthermore, several studies had analyzed teachers' readiness and obstacles in teaching and learning English, but it is not specific to teaching speaking online. Huang, et al. (2020) found obstacles in teaching and learning English during a pandemic, such as time consumption for preparing material and poor interaction during online learning. Then, Qismullah and Zuraini (2016) and Magdalena (2021) investigated the challenges in teaching speaking to EFL learners. It happened to the teachers and learners during the implementation of online speaking classes. It showed that online speaking classes affects students' speaking ability. Yuzulia (2021) also found the obstacles to teaching online. The obstacles were lack of motivation, poor connection, being easily distracted, and being stressed. Then, another study by Thamarana (2018) only focused on the prospect and possibilities of teaching speaking online. He found that the prospect and possibilities

depended on the teachers' readiness in teaching online speaking. Besides, the inadequate skills for being creative and active in teaching speaking were needed by the teacher. Besides, the use of technology became one of the challenges in teaching speaking online to ensure the performance of English teachers in online speaking classes (Sholihah, 2020). Another study was conducted by Churiyah, Sholikhah, Fiilianti, and Sakdiyah (2020), Sidqi (2020), and Ngoc-Phan and Thao-Dang (2017) who researched on the readiness of online learning, but it is too general for all subjects, not specific of speaking skill in English. They found that several teachers were ready and some were not ready to implement online learning. Tiara and Pratiwi (2020) found that teachers' readiness for online learning was essential to be measured because it will have an impact on teachers' and students' abilities.

Based on the pre-observation and previous studies, the researchers needed to conduct research on teachers' readiness and the teachers' obstacles in teaching speaking online. It is because readiness is important to make sure the teachers' ability to handle online speaking classes, in general, and anticipate the obstacles that happened during the implementation of the online speaking classes. The present study was also different from the previous studies because most previous studies just focused on teaching and learning English in general, not focus on online speaking classes. The objectives of this research were to find out the readiness and obstacles of English teachers during online teaching and learning speaking.

2. Literature review

2.1. Readiness of teachers to teach online

Saputri (2017), Rollnick, Mason, and Butler (2010), and Koo (2008) stated that teacher readiness in teaching online refers to the activities of teachers formulating learning objectives (formulating learning plans), implementing learning processes and learning assessments, and all of them are implemented online importance (attitude, readiness, confidence (ability) and knowledge. In terms of knowledge readiness, knowledge is a collection of facts, concepts, procedures, and metacognitive connected to ICT challenges that can be used to create online learning programs. Understanding basic computer operations, being able to use online collaboration tools (such as WA, email, Google Drive, Dropbox), being able to create and edit videos, being able to access help desks/online resources for help, and being able to share open educational resources (e.g., learning websites, web resources, games, and simulations) are all part of this readiness.

Then, in terms of attitude readiness, the teacher's attitude is their reaction to the demands of online learning, which may include: (1) enjoying working on the demands of teaching online; (2) trying new things for more interesting online learning media; (3) being challenged to create media/tools/materials online despite the difficulty of doing so; and (4) using a variety of learning resources to develop materials online. Next, in terms of ability readiness. The teacher's belief in his ability to use information and communication technology in learning which includes activities to (1) create an online

learning orientation; (2) explain the objectives of online learning that can be measured; (3) design online learning that allows students to discuss; (4) create instructional videos; (5) have the ability to develop online quizzes and assessments; and (6) capable of managing wealth on the internet.

2.2. Readiness factors

Emotional attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness are the three components of readiness. The first aspect is emotional preparedness, which is defined as the ability to accomplish a job, passion for a job, willingness to adapt to a job at any time, comfort and independence in performing duties, and reward for intrinsic value in a job. Cognitive Readiness is defined as having the cognitive skill and the ability to think critically about a job, being aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses, having established a link between the job done and real-world applications, being aware of one's own willingness to perform a job, and being capable of integrating concepts and instruments from various scientific disciplines. Behavioral readiness includes the willingness to work in collaboration with coworkers and facilitators, as well as the ability to create goals and stick to them when performing these tasks (Maddox, Forte, & Boozer, 2013).

2.3. Obstacles in speaking online instruction

Teachers faced obstacles in teaching English speaking during a pandemic. Those were facilities, internet connection, and lack of ICT competence. Apriani, et al. (2021) stated that some problems faced by English teachers were discipline, connection, and the materials. In this case, students sometimes were not attending on time in online speaking class. Besides, most students and teachers had problems in terms of internet networks. Their area did not have a good signal to connect to online platforms for learning to speak. Furthermore, the teachers were difficult to upload materials and used online materials for speaking.

3. Method

3.1. Research design

This research employed descriptive quantitative sequential mixed-method to gather the data with two phases (Creswell, 2014). The first part involved creating a survey to collect and analyze quantitative data. The second step builds on the first by collecting and analyzing qualitative data through interviews. Additionally, using a sequential explanatory design allows the researchers to explain and interpret the quantitative results by gathering additional quantitative data. This sequence would also be handy for delving deeper into any unexpected survey responses. The purpose of the survey was to provide a numerical description of the research participants' trends, readiness, and opinions. In this study, a survey approach will be used to identify and assess English teachers' readiness.

3.2. Population and sample

The participants in this study were 48 English teachers from Bengkulu City Senior High School. This study used 48 English teachers as a sample. It signifies that the researchers sampled the entire population. As a result, comprehensive sampling was used to conduct this study. Those English teachers ranged in age from 4 to 15 years of experience in the classroom. Furthermore, their educational background was a bachelor's degree in English education, with 20 teachers having completed a master's degree. During the interview, the researchers opted for five teachers from the sample to speak with. The teacher made their selections with care, taking into account their prior expertise in English education. Furthermore, they have prior experience teaching and learning online, either as a teacher or as a certified instructor, and so have a better understanding of the readiness in the teaching and learning process.

3.3. Data collection

To collect the data, the researchers used questionnaires to answer the research question regarding English teacher readiness in teaching speaking online. The indicators of questionnaires comprised emotive readiness, cognitive, and behavioral. The sub-indicators for cognitive are responsibility, enthusiasm, adaptation, comfort, and intrinsic values, while cognitive readiness involved critical thinking, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and contextual. Then, behavioral readiness comprised of partnership and time. The questionnaire was distributed to 48 English teachers via a Google form. However, the questionnaire has been validated by experts and tried out by some teachers. Then, to answer the research questions regarding problems faced by English teachers in teaching speaking online, the researchers used semi-structured interviews. The interview guideline was based on the indicators, such as knowledge, finances, network, media, and teacher and learners. The researchers interviewed 6 teachers as representatives.

3.4. Data analysis

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, the data were analyzed by using a simple calculation to find out the mean of the percentage from the questionnaire. Then, to know the validity and reliability, the researchers applied SPSS to count them. Qualitatively, the data were analyzed by using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) data analysis approach. Those were data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In this part, after collecting data from interviews, the data were reduced by the researchers based on the need to answer the second research question about the problems faced by English teachers. Then, the researchers displayed the data in terms of the text and proves them by writing the part of the transcript of the interview. Last, the conclusion was drawn by the researchers to know the final problems encountered by English teachers in teaching speaking online during the pandemic.

4. Findings

The researchers distributed questionnaires to 48 English teachers to know their readiness in teaching speaking virtually. The result can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

The questionnaire result of teachers' readiness in teaching speaking online.

No	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
1	I teach online speaking English based on the curriculum	22.6%	71%	6.5%	0%
2	I have adequate English ability in teaching online speaking	19.4%	80.6%	0%	0%
3	I am enthusiastic to teach English speaking online based on the schedule	74.2%	25.8%	0%	0%
4	I like doing interaction with students during online speaking class, so the students are comfortable	48.4%	48.4%	3.2%	0%
5	I adjust communication strategy with a simple, short and clear strategy in online speaking class	64.5%	35.5%	0%	0%
6	I give clear online speaking material based on the students' character	64.5%	32.5%	3.2%	0%
7	I follow and know the development of students in order to be easy in delivering online speaking material.	80.6%	19.4%	0%	0%
8	I make a lesson plan by imitating other teachers for an online class.	3.2%	35.5%	45.2%	16.1%
9	I find out by myself the additional material for online speaking	83.9%	16.1%	0%	0%
10	I used easy method for teaching online speaking	6.5%	93.5%	0%	0%
11	I am happy to get the critics and suggestion for my online teaching speaking	64.5%	35.5%	0%	0%
12	I use several ways and media to teach English speaking online to attract students' interest and motivation	16.1%	74.4%	6.5%	0%
13	I evaluate students' English speaking online	19.4%	80.6%	0%	0%
14	I answer students' question with easy explanation	22.6%	77.4%	0%	0%
15	I formulate the problem in teaching speaking online and then it is easy to be solved	6.5%	90.3%	3.2%	0%
16	I use English when speaking to students during online class	12.9%	77.4%	9.7%	0%
17	I use mother tongue to give instruction to the students during online speaking class	32.3%	51.6%	16.1%	0%
18	One of methods that I use during online speaking class is total Physical respond	6.5%	80.6%	12.9%	0%
19	I used song to teach speaking online	9.7%	77.4%	12.9%	0%
20	I asked the students to listen what I speak and asked them to imitate	32.3%	67.7%	0%	0%
21	I have strong intention to teach online speaking class	12.9%	80.6%	6.5%	0%
22	I want to be good role model for my students during online speaking class	38.7%	61.3%	0%	0%
23	I end my online speaking class based on the schedule	38.7%	61.3%	0%	0%
	Mean scores	33.95%	59.75%	5.4%	0.7%

Table 1 shows that majority English teachers strongly agree and agree about those statements that showed their readiness in teaching speaking online. It is proved by looking at the mean scores namely 33.95% of teachers choose strongly agree and 59.75% agree, but 5.4% disagree and 0.7% strongly disagree. In detail, most English teachers chose all items for strongly agree and agree. However, several teachers chose statements 1, 4, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21. In item 1, four teachers chose 6.5% for disagree because some teachers did not teach speaking online based on the curriculum. In item 4, only two teachers opted to disagree (3.2%) because they did not like doing interaction during speaking online classes. In item 8, 20 English teachers (45%) chose to disagree because they made lesson plans without imitating other teachers' lesson plans. For item 15, two

teachers disagree (3.2%) because they did not expect the problem to happen, and not easy to solve the problem during the online speaking class. For item 16, 9.7% of English teachers disagree because some teachers did not use English in teaching online speaking. For item 17, 16.1% disagree about it because some teachers used their mother tongue to teach online speaking in the class.

In item 18, 12.9% of teachers disagree because some teachers did not use TPR in teaching speaking online during the pandemic. For item 19, 12.9% opted to disagree because some teachers did not use songs to teach speaking online. For item 21, only 6.5% of English teachers chose to disagree because some teachers did not focus on teaching online speaking. In addition, only for item 8, some teachers (16.1%) chose strongly disagree because they never imitate other teachers to make online lesson plans for speaking. In short, based on the result of the questionnaire, the majority of English teachers in Bengkulu were ready to teach online speaking during the pandemic.

4.1. Obstacles faced by English teachers in teaching online speaking

Researchers interviewed six English teachers who had obstacles in teaching speaking virtually. The interview results can be seen in table 2.

Table 2
Obstacles in teaching online.

Researchers	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
What is your obstacle in teaching online speaking during this pandemic?	I think my problem when I want to assess my students' speaking virtually because I am difficult to give them feedback	To be honest, I am getting trouble giving marks for speaking virtually because it needs more time, and sometimes their voices are unclear	Actually, the connection of my students was unstable during teaching and learning to speak online	Hmm... I have a problem assessing their pronunciation. Besides, my students were not usually learning to speak virtually.	I am difficult to trigger interaction during teaching and learning speaking online.	Several students did not have mobile phones or laptops. Besides, several students were not active in the online classes.

Regarding the result of the interview, there were three main obstacles in teaching and learning speaking online. Those were difficult online speaking assessments, unstable connections, poor learning devices, and a lack of online interaction. First, several teachers had problems in terms of assessment. The English teachers were not easy to do online speaking for speaking classes. It is proved by the statements of teachers 1, 2, and 4, “*I think my problem when I want to assess my students' speaking virtually..., I am getting trouble with giving mark for speaking..., I have a problem in assessing their pronunciation*”. This problem occurred because the teachers did not know how to do online speaking assessments and need more time. Second, the teacher had a bad connection in teaching online speaking, as teacher 3 says, “*connection of my students was unstable*”.

The second problem happens to the students because some students were in a place in which having an unstable network. The third problem was online interaction. In this part, the English teachers did not have easy to do online interaction with the students, as teacher 5 said, *"I am difficult to trigger the interaction during teaching and learning speaking online.* It happens because the English teachers and students were not usual to do interaction virtually. Then, teacher 6 said that some students did not participate in the online speaking class. The fourth problem was in available learning devices. Some students did not have a mobile phone, laptop, or computer. It was because they did not have money to buy it. As teacher 6 said, *"students did not have mobile phones or laptops".*

5. Discussion

Regarding the research objectives of this study, the two main discussions of this research are teachers' readiness of teaching speaking online and the obstacles to English teachers. First, based on the questionnaire result, the majority of English teachers were ready to teach speaking online. They were ready in terms of emotive attitudinal, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness. In emotive attitudinal, the English teachers were responsible in doing their task, independent in doing their task, willing to adapt, making students comfortable, and having good enthusiasm about teaching speaking online.

In the questionnaire, it can be seen in statements 1 (*I teach online speaking English based on the curriculum*), statement 3 (*I am enthusiastic to teach English speaking online based on the schedule*), statement 4 (*I like doing interaction with students during online speaking class, so the students are comfortable*), and statement 5 (*I adjust communication strategy with a simple, short and clear strategy in online speaking class*) and statement 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. In emotive attitudinal readiness, most English teachers chose strongly agree and agree with those statements because they think that they could be ready in terms of emotion in teaching speaking online. In terms of cognitive readiness, teachers would have a good ability in thinking critically, use methods, evaluate, and comprehend the materials. In the questionnaire, for instance, it can be seen in statement 2 (*I have adequate English ability in teaching online speaking*), statement 6 (*I give clear online speaking material based on the students' character*), statement 7 (*I follow and know the development of students in order to be easy in delivering online speaking material*), statement 13 (*I evaluate students' English speaking online*), statement 14 (*I answer students' question with easy explanation*), and statement 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22.

In cognitive readiness, most English teachers choose to agree and disagree about those statements. It means that they were able to teach online speaking with their cognitive readiness. However, several English teachers did not agree about statements 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 21 because some teachers cannot use English during speaking online classes. Besides, some teachers used their mother tongue in teaching online speaking. Then, some teachers did not use songs and total physical response in teaching speaking and cannot solve the problems of speaking in speaking class. In terms of behavioral readiness, all English teachers opted to agree and strongly agree because they stopped

teaching online speaking classes based on the time that has been given. This can be seen in statement 23, *I end my online speaking class based on the schedule*. It means that they finished their teaching on time.

The first finding of this research is in accordance with the theory from Maddox (2000) who told about the readiness of the teacher whether in teaching offline or online. The teacher can be ready in teaching if they have fulfilled the readiness of emotive, cognitive, and behavioral. This readiness is very important to support the English teacher in achieving their goals of teaching speaking online. However, this finding is not in line with Sihmachalam (2018) who found that the teachers seemed not ready in teaching speaking online because of a technical problem. They saw that the majority of teachers in a certain area could apply online applications in teaching speaking online. Ali, et al. (2012) stated that the application of technology needs to be explored in teaching speaking online and English teachers need to be ready in using it. In contrast, Afolabi (2015) found that several students and teachers were not ready to do online learning because they do not have the inadequate ability in operating the applications of technology during online learning all skills.

The second finding showed several obstacles that English teachers faced during the implementation of speaking online classes. Those obstacles were online speaking assessment, unstable connection, learning devices, and low interaction. In online speaking assessment, several English teachers were hard to assess students virtually because they did not know the steps of doing it. Besides, they were not usual to do online evaluations for speaking classes. In terms of connectivity, the teachers complained that some students did not have a good connection in learning online speaking because their location did not support the connection. It was the same for the teachers, some teachers also experienced poor connection in teaching online speaking. This affects the process of teaching and learning speaking online.

In terms of learning devices, several students did not have mobile phones, laptops, or computers as devices for learning speaking online. This influences their achievement in speaking. The last is the low interaction problem. In online speaking classes, some teachers thought that the interaction for speaking class was not optimum because several obstacles happened during the implementation of speaking online classes. The interaction between teacher and students and students and students was not maximum. Some students were not active in the online speaking class. This finding was different from the previous studies, Qismullah and Zuraini (2016) and Mulyadi (2018) faced challenges in teaching speaking online, but the result showed that technology was a problem in teaching. It meant that the technology cannot be used by several teachers in teaching speaking online. Apriani, et al. (2021) also found almost similar findings to this study, where they found that some problems were discipline, connection, and materials. Besides, Mattarima and Hamdan (2011), and Okinda (2014) found that several obstacles for teachers to teach speaking online were inappropriate online assessment and classroom management. In addition, Louwrens and Hartnett (2015), Mahajan and Kalpana (2018), Sari, Pramesti,

and Kusuma (2020), and Rahayu (2020) showed several students and teachers gave negative responses on online teaching learning because the interaction of students was not maximum and effects on their understanding of the English materials.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that majority English teachers in Bengkulu city were ready to teach speaking online, even though some teachers needed to prepare several things before teaching English Speaking. Furthermore, several teachers faced a few obstacles in teaching online speaking during the pandemic Covid 19 namely online assessment, poor connection, low interaction, and unavailable learning devices. This can be a suggestion for English teachers to be more ready in teaching online speaking. Then, several English teachers must anticipate those obstacles by asking for help from other teachers who have more knowledge regarding online speaking assessment. The English teachers needed to create a good online atmosphere to increase the participation of students in online speaking classes. It is the same for poor connection and unavailability of learning devices should be anticipated by English teachers.

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